United Nations S/PV.4139

Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

Provisional

4139th Meeting

Thursday, 11 May 2000, 8 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Yingfan	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Keita
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 10 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/408)

Letter dated 11 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/409)

Letter dated 11 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/410)

00-42775 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 8.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

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Letter dated 11 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/409)

Letter dated 11 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/410)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Djibouti, India, Japan, Jordan, Mozambique, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal and Sierra Leone, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Satoh (Japan), Prince Zeid Bin Ra'ad (Jordan), Mr. Gouveia (Mozambique), Mr. Brattskar (Norway), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan) and Mr. Monteiro (Portugal) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

First of all, let me welcome the Secretary-General, who has joined us for our discussion on the situation in Sierra Leone.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the requests contained in the letter dated 10 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea, and in the letters dated 11 May 2000 from the Chargés d'affaires ad interim of Mali and Namibia, documents S/2000/408, S/2000/409 and S/2000/410, respectively.

I would like to emphasize the urgency and importance of the matter before the Council. Since the deterioration of the situation in Sierra Leone, the Security Council has heard regular briefings from the Secretariat and had a number of very useful consultations.

I call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I commend the Council, and other Member States represented here, for the sense of urgency they are showing in dealing with this grave crisis in Sierra Leone. This is entirely appropriate, given the very serious challenge which that situation now presents to all of us in the international community.

As of this moment, several hundred United Nations peacekeepers — the great majority of them Zambians — are still being detained against their will in various parts of Sierra Leone. These are soldiers who came to Sierra Leone not as enemies but as friends and peacemakers, under the terms of an agreement negotiated and signed by both parties, including Corporal Foday Sankoh on behalf of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The United Nations peacekeeping mission was asked, under the agreement, to manage the disarmament process.

It is deplorable and unacceptable that the same RUF should now not only interfere with the disarmament process but arbitrarily detain members of the United Nations mission. Once again I would remind Mr. Sankoh that he is responsible for the action of forces under his command. He will be held accountable for their actions, and for the safety and well-being of all those who have been detained.

I demand the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations personnel, and I thank all those, in particular the leaders of neighbouring countries, who are working to secure that outcome. I am glad to confirm

that two United Nations military personnel were released earlier today.

But it must go without saying that our concern is not limited to the safety of United Nations peacekeepers. It must embrace the plight of all those they are there to help, namely, the people of Sierra Leone, now threatened with yet another round of fighting and inevitably fearful that the atrocities of past years will be renewed.

It is vital that the world should not now abandon the people of Sierra Leone in their hour of greatest need. They are entitled to expect not only humanitarian assistance — which United Nations agencies are continuing to provide — but also some protection.

Let me remind the Council that our mission was configured as a peacekeeping force. It was neither designed nor equipped to be an enforcement operation. And it was attacked by one of the parties that had pledged to cooperate with it, before it had been properly deployed. Given that new situation, we have to consolidate and reinforce our troops so that they can defend themselves and their mandates effectively, and so that they can help stabilize the situation.

I am glad to say that additional troops are on their way, including units with battle experience and with combat equipment, such as artillery and helicopter gunships. I thank the troop-contributing countries for making these units and equipment available more rapidly and in greater numbers than had been anticipated. In fact, when all these troops have arrived, the military component of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is likely to exceed the maximum authorized by the Council in resolution 1289 (2000). I hope that, in the circumstances, the Council will be willing to set a new and more generous limit.

That said, the logistical difficulties we face should not be underestimated. Our logistics staff is working very hard. They have arranged at very short notice for some 120 to 150 flights into Freetown's Lungi airport, using a variety of aircraft to bring troops, equipment and supplies from several different countries.

While most of these flights will use United Nations-chartered aircraft, we are very grateful to those Member States that are assisting us with this effort. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom has made an invaluable contribution by securing the airport. The presence of British troops, even for a limited time and with a limited mandate, is a very important stabilizing factor.

I am also greatly encouraged by the willingness of subregional leaders, expressed at their meeting in Abuja on Tuesday, not only to contribute more troops to Sierra Leone but also to re-engage themselves politically in the quest for long-term peace and stability. We must cooperate with them in reassessing the political situation and in finding ways to reactivate the peace process. The new troops could perhaps form the nucleus of a rapid reaction force, which I remain convinced would be the best way to provide UNAMSIL with the combat capability it needs.

I know that West African leaders, among others, have also called for a revision of UNAMSIL's mandate, to give it a clear enforcement role. I am not necessarily opposed to that, but whatever mandate is decided, the first priority for the Council must be to ensure that we have the capacity to carry out the tasks that its mandate implies. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) offer of troops is very important in this respect, but it is contingent on financial and logistical support from other Member States.

I hope — I should like to say, "I trust" — that that support will now be forthcoming. A degree of regional or subregional specialization in handling security issues is quite natural and healthy, but it cannot and must not be seen as a substitute for the overall responsibility of the United Nations, and of this Council in particular. It is a refrain that the Council has heard from me before, but it has never been more pertinent than it is tonight. Africans are facing up courageously to the appalling problems of their continent. They rightly look for help to the rest of the world, especially to its more powerful and prosperous States, and most especially to the Council, which began the year with such a strong reaffirmation of its commitment to Africa.

This Organization has made a commitment to the people of Sierra Leone. We now face a test of our resolve to abide by that commitment. More than that, the plight of Sierra Leone and its people has become a crucial test for the fundamental solidarity between peoples, rising above race and above geography, which is the most basic guiding principle of this Organization.

Mr. President, I plead with you: let us not fail Sierra Leone; let us not fail Africa. This time, in this

crisis, let us back words with deeds, and mandates with the resources needed to make them work.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

The next speaker is the representative of Algeria, who wishes to make a statement on behalf of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting on Sierra Leone in these particularly grave circumstances. On behalf of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and on my own behalf, I should like to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I should also like to wish you well in your difficult and noble mission. I congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Robert Fowler of Canada, on having so ably presided over the work of this Council last month.

I should like to pay a well-deserved tribute on this solemn occasion to those countries that have contributed troops to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and to convey the sincere condolences of Algeria and the OAU for the lives lost during the tragic events that have taken place recently in Sierra Leone.

Today, our Organization faces an extremely grave challenge. It is threatened as never before, in body and in soul, in its role as the last bulwark against injustice and arbitrary action, and in its action and will to preserve peace and security and to ensure that reason prevails.

Over the past few days, we have witnessed an unprecedented explosion of violence in Sierra Leone caused by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, whose principal target was the United Nations Mission in that country. Today, according to the information we have received, more than 230 UNAMSIL troops are still detained by the rebel movement, and an equal number are still missing. The people of Sierra Leone, who have undergone the worst of horrors and suffered enormously over the past eight years, are once again faced with the murderous madness of the men of Mr. Sankoh, whose commitment under the Lomé Agreement was supposed to make him into a positive actor in the rebuilding of a new Sierra Leone.

Faced with this unacceptable challenge, the United Nations must be extremely firm and act with all the determination that the seriousness of the situation requires. Clearly, it must demand and obtain the unconditional release of all UNAMSIL personnel currently in the hands of the RUF, and it must hold that movement responsible for their safety and well-being.

It must also, as soon as possible, regain its prestige and credibility and restore its image, which has been so seriously damaged by the criminal acts of a band of outlaws.

In Africa, we see these indescribable actions by the RUF as a serious setback to the cause of peace — which, thanks to work of our pan-African organization, had seen significant progress in past months — and as an unacceptable affront to the United Nations and an even more serious affront to the very concept of the maintenance of peace in the world in general and on our continent in particular.

Faced with this challenge, our Secretary-General has actively sought to find ways and means of ensuring an appropriate reaction by the international community so as to establish a rapid reaction force that could reverse the events in Sierra Leone, and I pay him special tribute for doing so. We also know that he has constantly been in touch with African leaders, in particular the current Chairman of the OAU, in an attempt to find a way out of the crisis. President Bouteflika has, for his part, spared no effort since the beginning of the crisis, maintaining frequent contact with the leaders in the region, particular the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in order to cope with the challenge of the actions of the RUF.

In this context, in a message to the summit meeting of countries members of the ECOWAS follow-up committee, which met in Abuja on 9 May, he condemned the acts of violence and hostage taking against United Nations personnel, calling them intolerable attacks against UNAMSIL and against the commendable efforts of the international community to promote the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

What is happening today in Sierra Leone is one of the most serious crises ever to face the United Nations, at a time when it is just beginning to find its feet in a constantly evolving world in which it is called upon to become increasingly involved in the continent.

Our Organization's credibility is being seriously challenged, and it is in danger of having its authority reduced and its role in conflict settlement and the maintenance of international peace and security challenged.

After the tragedies of Rwanda and Bosnia, the United Nations cannot afford another failure today. Images of Blue Helmets taken hostage, used as human shields or stripped of their weapons and uniforms by gangs of bandits are not acceptable. They are the very negation of all of the values that this world Organization personifies and a signal to the enemies of peace that the United Nations is not an institution that must always be respected or, if necessary, feared, but that it is a mere scarecrow, unable to make itself felt and to command respect.

Less than a year ago, after much effort, ECOWAS was able, thanks to Togolese mediation and the spirit of compromise demonstrated by the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone, to see the Lomé Peace Agreement concluded. This welcome development was to put an end to years of devastating civil war, a cycle of particularly brutal violence that reached its nadir in January 1999, when rebels attacked Freetown. Sacrifices made by the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) force allowed it, at a difficult moment, to repel the attackers and protect people who had already been so sorely tried against further horror. Here, I would pay a well-deserved tribute to that force, whose work was a decisive factor in making the RUF rebels and Johnny Paul Koroma's partisans sit at the negotiating table and conclude the Lomé Agreement on 7 July 1999.

Need I recall here that the many appeals by ECOWAS for significant international logistic and financial assistance for ECOMOG went unanswered? Troop contributors to ECOMOG, particularly Nigeria, had to finance out of their own national resources a very burdensome operation without the strong material support they were entitled to expect from the international community.

This test of UNAMSIL shows very clearly that the mandate and resources available to it are not and never were adequate to the situation. We must all recognize here that, with the mandate and pathetically small resources at its disposal, that force is unable to preserve the peace in Sierra Leone or even to protect itself against provocation and acts of violence. We would therefore solemnly appeal to the Council to review urgently the UNAMSIL mandate and then adopt a new resolution placing UNAMSIL action within the context of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, making it a peace-enforcement mission.

What we ask of the United Nations is, of course, not to wage war against the rebellion, but rather that the Mission have the mandate, troops and weapons necessary to defend itself against attack by the enemies of peace. The United Nations soldiers have become the targets of rebel attacks. The force must also be able to discharge its mission to ensure and monitor compliance with the provisions of the Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999 and to protect the people against further outbreaks of violence. Increasing UNAMSIL's troop strength and giving it the weapons it needs is an essential imperative today.

I should like to inform the Council of the willingness of certain members of ECOWAS, clearly stated at their 9 May summit in Abuja, to make the necessary troops available to the United Nations to strengthen its Mission in Sierra Leone. Countries with the necessary resources should, for their part, offer an appropriate logistic and financial contribution to UNAMSIL so that it can best discharge its revised mandate.

This is a matter of urgency. There is danger in delay. Africa is willing to shoulder its share of the responsibility. It expects the Security Council to react firmly and resolutely, commensurate with the grave situation in Sierra Leone and its challenges. The Council must assume its responsibilities, all its responsibilities, and the sooner the better.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Algeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): In my capacity as coordinator of the States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and on behalf of my delegation, I should like to convey our deep appreciation to you, Sir, for having convened this important meeting of the Security Council on Sierra Leone. We called for this meeting under the mandate that the heads of State of our organization, meeting in Abuja on 9 May, gave the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to convey to the ambassadors of the Africa Group in New York to do.

We welcome the Secretary-General of the United Nations here and wish to express our deep condolences to the families of the Blue Helmets who have given their lives for the noble cause of peace.

The African continent, its western subregion in particular, is deeply concerned by recent developments in the Sierra Leone crisis. In truth, the hostage-taking of soldiers of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) is a defiance of the international community and cannot be tolerated. ECOWAS and Mali condemn it firmly and demand the unconditional and immediate release of the hostages, as well as the restoration of their weapons. The turn of events not only threatens international peace and security in that African subregion, but also damages the United Nations credibility with respect to peacekeeping operations, particularly in Africa.

In the context of the flagrant violations of the Lomé Agreement, which governs the peace process in Sierra Leone, I wish to address several issues that my and other African delegations consider to need the priority attention of the Security Council.

First, my delegation wishes to emphasize that the RUF leader is the party primarily responsible for the resumed civil war in Sierra Leone. Accordingly, we wish to state that, if the hostages are killed, the RUF and its leader will forfeit the amnesty benefits granted under the Lomé Agreement and prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Secondly, by taking UNAMSIL soldiers hostage, Foday Sankoh and his movement are challenging the international community that must be met speedily. The current mandate of the Mission cannot be discharged in view of the new situation. We therefore call on the Security Council to revise the current mandate of the peacekeeping force, which would then become a peace-enforcement mission with the manpower and armaments appropriate to its mandate. This new legal framework for intervention should not imperil the Lomé Agreement, which my delegation considers to be the appropriate context for settling the civil war that has scourged Sierra Leone for more than 10 years.

Thirdly, as the Chairman of ECOWAS, Mali wishes to convey our determination to oppose by every possible means, including military, any assumption of power by force in Sierra Leone. We stand ready to make available to the United Nations veteran forces with experience in the field to strengthen the peacekeeping Mission and restore peace in Sierra Leone. Any failure in that country would be felt deeply throughout the region and damage the credibility of the Security Council.

Fourthly, my delegation is deeply concerned for the fate of civilians and displaced persons. We call for immediate steps to be taken in order to protect them and to ensure that they can be freely assisted throughout the territory of Sierra Leone.

We warn the leaders of the RUF not to make any attempt to invade Freetown; that would be an affront to the subregion and would be answered by force, whatever the cost.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that this is a critical situation. The Security Council must act and act quickly, because what is involved is the lives of millions of persons who have placed their trust in the United Nations. We cannot betray the faith and hope that they have placed in our Organization. Any failure of the United Nations would be fraught with consequences for the continuation of peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): The Secretary-General's presence with us and the statement he has just made testify to the importance of our debate tonight.

The situation in Sierra Leone is very serious. All of us have followed the events of the past days in Sierra Leone with a sense of foreboding. The present tragic breakdown could have dire consequences. We are especially conscious of the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone. If the response of the United Nations and the international community does not match up to the challenge, the consequences will be far-reaching — not just for Sierra Leone, but also for Africa, United Nations peacekeeping and the United Nations itself. My delegation is grateful to the African Group for taking the initiative in calling this meeting, and grateful to you, Mr. President, for arranging it so rapidly.

We must focus now on the immediate crisis. I do not want to spend too much time and energy allocating blame. But my delegation is in no doubt at whose door the principal responsibility should be laid. Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) supporters have flagrantly violated the peace agreements to which he and they are a party. Sankoh stands condemned before the international community, including in statements by this Council. He and his colleagues must bear responsibility for what has happened over the last few days. As the Secretary-General and others have said, they must be held accountable for their actions.

We must now take the action necessary to ensure that Sankoh and his supporters do not succeed in breaking the peace for which the ordinary people of Sierra Leone yearn and which they so richly deserve. We are firmly of the view that the cornerstone of our efforts must be the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). An effective United Nations force, fully staffed and equipped to meet its mandate, offers the best hope for restoring lasting peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

The United Kingdom has taken a number of important steps to support UNAMSIL. Last weekend we deployed the British Spearhead Battalion to Freetown. That deployment is primarily for the evacuation of United Kingdom nationals. But we also believe that the deployment of our troops, who have secured Lungi airport, made a real contribution to the efforts of UNAMSIL. We have kept that vital link open and thus freed up UNAMSIL troops to concentrate on their wider task. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for his kind words about the effect the presence of our forces has had, and I will ensure that they are passed on to those concerned.

Today, following a review of the situation in Sierra Leone with Cabinet colleagues, Prime Minister Blair confirmed that the British forces in Sierra Leone would continue their mission to evacuate United Kingdom and other nationals, and to secure Lungi airport, while the United Nations force builds up over the next month. There is no question of British troops being deployed in a combat role as part of the United Nations force, nor of an open-ended commitment. The arrival in the area of HMS *Ocean*, with her embarked marines, will provide further force flexibility and be in a position to relieve those forces already in theatre, if necessary.

A United Kingdom military advisory team is also in Freetown, at United Nations request, to help the United Nations assess what technical support is needed to strengthen UNAMSIL. The United Kingdom will continue to offer technical and logistical support to help strengthen the Mission.

UNAMSIL has borne the brunt of Sankoh's actions and suffered the consequences. I pay an unreserved tribute to the way in which its Commander, General Jetley, and his colleagues have dealt with the present difficult situation. Similar tributes are due to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and those engaged on Sierra Leone in New York. Our thoughts are with those UNAMSIL personnel who have been detained by the RUF. As the Secretary-General has said, they must be released, and quickly. And our hearts go out to the families of those who have given their lives in the service of the United Nations.

My delegation also wishes to pay tribute to the efforts of regional leaders who have worked hard to support the Government of Sierra Leone. It is imperative that they, and all of us, put as much pressure as possible on Foday Sankoh to return to the path of peaceful dialogue and political progress charted in the Lomé Agreement.

The response of the United Nations to the crisis holds the key to its future solution. The Security Council has a grave responsibility. It is essential that we get things right. We must therefore keep our eye firmly on the immediate objective: to reinforce UNAMSIL and get it up to strength. We are grateful to the Governments of India, Bangladesh and Jordan for expediting the deployment of their battalions. That deployment must take place as quickly as possible. We welcome the willingness of the Economic Community of West African States leaders, following their summit meeting in Abuja on 9 May, to consider, in the event of new involvement of regional forces in Sierra Leone, the practical modalities of such involvement. Any new troops should be blue-hatted, properly equipped for the job they have to do, under a single United Nations chain of command and with the same rules of engagement.

Progress is now being made, and we obviously welcome that. The United Kingdom team at Lungi will be working with UNAMSIL to see how more air movements can be handled through the airport, thus relieving this potential bottleneck in efforts to strengthen UNAMSIL.

For the moment, UNAMSIL's mandate is sufficient for it to carry out its tasks. It is already a strong one. It contains elements that allow for the use of force in self-defence and, where possible, in defence of the civilian population. Clearly, as the situation evolves, we should look at the tasks we expect UNAMSIL to carry out. The decision on how to mandate the Mission will depend on those tasks. Once the situation has stabilized, we will be better placed to look at those issues. We will need the Secretary-General's professional advice, which will no doubt be based on Under-Secretary-General Miyet's assessment. That need not take long to produce. But we should be wary of adopting an over-hasty approach. The Secretary-General was right to point out that changing UNAMSIL's mandate will not of itself change it into an

effective peace enforcement mission; and moving to peace enforcement would be a radical change of approach. We should think carefully about whether this is right or practicable.

It is clear what the immediate response to the crisis has to be. We must not take our eye off the ball. We must get UNAMSIL up to strength. Those who can help achieve this must do so quickly. This Council must send a clear message of political support for UNAMSIL, and it must be ready to do anything necessary to assist UNAMSIL's reinforcement. The United Kingdom has already done a great deal. Our efforts will continue. The people of Sierra Leone have waited for peace and stability for far too long.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada is seriously concerned over the situation in Sierra Leone, because of both the grave danger to many of the people of Sierra Leone and the repugnant image of hundreds of troops of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) being detained by a signatory of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

As UNAMSIL consolidates its positions, the international community must expedite and revive its efforts to support the mission. On the ground, the United Nations is maintaining its position, and its Members must do the same. We must remain firm in our commitment not to abandon Sierra Leone or the people that the Council has put in a dangerous situation and has mandated to carry out its orders on behalf of all the Members of the Organization.

Canada was proud to announce yesterday that it would offer an air lift for rapid deployment of troops from India and Bangladesh. We are now considering increasing our assistance to UNAMSIL troops, who are without sufficient equipment. That decision supplements earlier contributions by Canada, which has sent military observers and which continues to provide significant humanitarian-assistance support to Sierra Leone. We have also made a significant contribution to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and are ready to renew our support when the situation in Sierra Leone becomes stable.

We have seen how the rapid deployment of a highly professional contingent from the United Kingdom to Freetown and to Lungi helped stabilize the situation. We hope that when the international military presence is stepped up, those charged with maintaining the peace, along with civilians, will be threatened less, and that conditions will be met for resuming the peace process. We must show true and strong determination, and must ensure that civilians will not be left to face the rebel terror, as they were in January 1999.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada is encouraged by the results of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit held at Abuja on 9 May and by the continued commitment of West African States to a peaceful and stable Sierra Leone. ECOWAS has demonstrated its capacity to make a difference in Sierra Leone in the past, at great cost in money and in lives. Specifically, the West African force — the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) — has amply demonstrated its ability to constrain violence by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). ECOWAS member States, and most particularly Nigeria, are already playing a key role in UNAMSIL and will, we fervently hope, agree to make an even larger contribution to deterring further aggression on the part of the RUF.

It is imperative that the peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone be truly multilateral and under the United Nations flag, and that the burden associated with fielding and deploying that force be shared among Member States. Canada encourages Member States to work towards the creation of a strong, united and cohesive force to restore a climate of confidence and order in Sierra Leone. That force, we believe, should take the form of an expanded UNAMSIL and should respect the fundamental military principle of unity of command, in this case the command of Major-General Jetley.

The Security Council agreed in October 1999, when the UNAMSIL mandate was approved, that a hybrid force for Sierra Leone was undesirable, dangerous, unjust and unworkable, and could lead to further instability and confusion. The Council must recommit itself to establishing a strong, united and credible force in the face of appalling provocation on the part of the RUF. We, should also be prepared to revisit UNAMSIL's mandate in the light of the fundamental changes in the situation on the ground and to re-examine, on a regular basis, UNAMSIL's requirements in personnel and capabilities.

UNAMSIL has a strong mandate with provisions for the protection of civilians. What we need now are appropriate resources to prevent further slippage. Canada is extremely troubled by reports by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that more than half of the children who have participated in the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration programme are at risk of being re-recruited by rebel forces, or of being punished by them for desertion. Ensuring the safety of those 900 children must be an immediate priority of UNAMSIL once it regains the upper hand in its areas of deployment.

The threat of sliding back into civil war in Sierra Leone demonstrates yet again the need for a radically improved capacity for rapid reaction by the United Nations. Specifically, Canada encourages Member States to commit themselves to improving the capability of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the areas of military planning services, Headquarters oversight, access to reliable field-level intelligence, effective communications and longer term contingency planning. Earlier today, the Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, called a special meeting in Lucerne of representatives of the 13 members of the Human Security Network at which the topic of United Nations peacekeeping capacity was discussed. The members agreed to work together and examine steps for possible action.

While we should continue to direct our efforts towards reinforcing the contingents already in the field, we cannot lose sight of the unfulfilled requirements of effective peacekeeping. We must address these if we are to consolidate peace and security in Sierra Leone and put an end to eight years of needless suffering. As we work to strengthen UNAMSIL and the ability of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to plan for and assist the mission as it adapts to changing circumstances, Council members must also take a strong and clear-eyed stand in addressing the roots of this crisis, and indeed of the conflict in Sierra Leone.

In addition to condemning in the strongest terms the illegal detention of UNAMSIL civilian and military personnel, we must undertake to hold accountable the parties responsible for these breaches of the Lomé Peace Agreement, including RUF leader Foday Sankoh. The Council should examine all avenues at its disposal for ensuring that the violence perpetrated in the name of greed in Sierra Leone does not go unpunished. We wish to stress that we do not consider the United Nations to be bound by the Lomé amnesty provisions as they apply to genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law.

We must also undertake to address the role of both the illicit diamond trade and small-arms trafficking in fuelling and sustaining this conflict. Specifically, Council members should consider a range of targeted measures to ensure that diamond revenues are used exclusively for the purposes specified in the Lomé Peace Agreement, that is for the benefit of the people of Sierra Leone. Canada looks forward to the report of the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Miyet, tomorrow, and will give sympathetic consideration to any recommendations from the Secretary-General for further Council action in support of UNAMSIL.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening an open emergency meeting of the Security Council tonight to consider the rapidly deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone. We support that decision, as we believe that the broader membership of the Organization, in particular the African States, should have an opportunity to be heard on this very important subject.

My delegation expresses once again its grave concern at the outbreak of violence in Sierra Leone over the past two weeks, and condemns in the strongest terms the armed attacks perpetrated by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against United Nations personnel. We note with deep regret the losses suffered by the Kenyan peacekeeping battalion of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and would like to take this opportunity to extend our sympathy and condolences to the families of the fallen peacekeepers and to the Government of Kenya. Scores of others have been wounded, and some 500 United Nations personnel, including personnel from Malaysia, are still being detained by the rebel forces. This is an unacceptable state of affairs, and every effort should be made and all necessary means used to secure their release.

Through a presidential statement on 4 May 2000, the Council demanded that the RUF cease its hostile actions and release immediately and unharmed all detained United Nations and other international personnel. This has not been heeded by Mr. Foday Sankoh and his followers. As leader of the RUF, Mr. Sankoh is ultimately responsible for these deplorable actions, which are in clear violation of the obligations under the Lomé Peace Agreement. He must be held accountable.

My delegation agrees with the view that among the immediate priorities are for UNAMSIL to strengthen its presence by regrouping in larger numbers to enable the force to better defend itself should it come under rebel attack. The stabilization of the situation around the Freetown peninsula is also an immediate priority, and we

look forward with some urgency to the early arrival of the additional battalions from India, Bangladesh and Jordan to bring UNAMSIL to its authorized strength. In this regard, we commend the role played by the British forces in securing the main airport in Freetown.

While we commend Force Commander Jetley and Special Representative Adeniji for their respective roles in managing the crisis on the ground, we strongly believe that the time has come for the Council to consider the possible next steps. At the top of our agenda should be the dispatch of a rapid reaction force to Sierra Leone for the purpose of stabilizing the situation and putting the political process back on track. We commend the Secretary-General for his frenetic efforts in mobilizing such a force. We urge countries with the resources to do so to respond promptly to the efforts of the Secretary-General so that the rapid reaction force can be dispatched forthwith.

We do not think that a United Nations withdrawal from Sierra Leone is an option to be considered. That would be sending the wrong message to the peace-loving people of Sierra Leone — who have endured so much in the last nine years — and to Africa as a whole, another example of the international community abandoning the continent yet again. That option also risks inviting a run at Freetown by the RUF. However, we do believe that the peacekeeping environment in which we envisaged UNAMSIL to be operating under when we adopted resolution 1289 (2000) is no longer relevant in the present circumstances. The premise of having a peace agreement on the table and having parties to the conflict fully cooperating in its implementation, including the voluntary disarmament of armed elements under the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), is in the process of unravelling, if it is not already unravelled.

We will have to make an immediate, in-depth evaluation of the situation — both on the military and political fronts — and take appropriate decisions. We run the risk of having United Nations personnel being overrun by the RUF, who are intent not only on destroying the DDR process — as evidenced in the last few months — but on challenging the resolve of UNAMSIL in the wake of the full withdrawal from Sierra Leone of the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Clearly, the actions of the RUF have been well timed and orchestrated. A few more weeks and UNAMSIL would have been strengthened further with extra battalions, and the disarmament process would have been consolidated.

My delegation deeply regrets that the RUF has challenged not only the peace process, but also the largest United Nations force the Organization has mounted anywhere. The credibility of the Council is at stake. Criticisms have been voiced that the United Nations force deployed in Sierra Leone was ill equipped, or not adequately mandated, to deal with the demands of the situation on the ground. The question of whether the limited Chapter VII mandate at present given to UNAMSIL continues to be adequate must be promptly examined in the light of the hard realities on the ground and in the context of the changed environment from that originally envisaged. My delegation would like to recall that we had been willing to go with the limited Chapter VII mandate then because there was an agreement on the table and because the cooperation of the parties was assured to be forthcoming. Clearly, many of us have been proven wrong and we will have to recalibrate our response appropriately.

We welcome the decision of the recently concluded ECOWAS summit in Abuja for its members to use all means at their disposal, including the military option, to foil any attempt to take over power in Sierra Leone through the use of force. Such a rapid deployment will be helpful, and we look forward to the decision to be taken at the meeting of the ministers of defence and chiefs of staff to be held in Abuja on 17 May 2000 to consider the practical modalities in the event of a new ECOMOG involvement in Sierra Leone.

Malaysia has consistently advocated that ECOMOG contributing countries — particularly Nigeria, which has shouldered a disproportionate burden of ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone in the past — be assisted in maintaining its forces there. The situation has now come full circle, and ECOMOG is once again poised to play a pivotal role to assist the international community in restoring order in the country. The offer must be accepted. However, we believe that under the present circumstances all countries deploying troops in Sierra Leone should come under the United Nations banner and under one command structure. Adequate resources must be found for this purpose. This is the responsibility of all Member States, big and small.

The real test of our resolve will come in the coming days and weeks. The situation calls for a rapid and cohesive response from the Organization and from the international community at large. It is our fervent hope that tonight's deliberations, and subsequent Council deliberations, will lead to action that will reverse this sorry state of affairs and re-establish the authority and

credibility of the Organization over the situation in Sierra Leone. This is imperative because of its ramifications, not only in Africa but world-wide. My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that we must act, and act quickly, for we cannot afford to fail the people of Sierra Leone; we cannot afford to fail Africa yet again.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): Unfortunately, the Security Council is meeting in emergency session tonight because a grave crisis is under way in Sierra Leone. Unfolding events threaten yet again to undermine the democratically elected government of President Kabbah. Renewed violence has initiated another round of human suffering for the people of Sierra Leone, a people who have suffered too much already.

The American Government and the American people have viewed events in Sierra Leone with shock and dismay. Despite the presence of more than 8,500 United Nations peacekeepers, those who oppose peace in Sierra Leone, especially the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, have initiated new attacks and detained hundreds United Nations and other international personnel. Such actions are totally unacceptable, and this threat to peace and security must be brought to an end.

We all know that peacekeeping is inherently risky. We commend the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and its troops, and the Secretary-General and his staff, for their commitment and for their attempts to respond to the difficult situation in which they have found themselves. But we must be clear that the fault for the current tragedy in Sierra Leone lies with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and its leader, Foday Sankoh, for their violations of the commitments undertaken in the Lomé Agreement.

Unless the situation is resolved and the peace process put back on track, we could be faced with a resumption of one of the most ruthless and brutal rebellions in the world. The conflict could spill over Sierra Leone's borders, engulfing neighbouring States and threatening stability throughout West Africa. We could face a general reluctance to support United Nations peacekeeping in Africa.

We strongly support the United Nations peacekeepers. They were organized and sent to Sierra Leone not to impose a settlement, not to enforce the peace, but to assist in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement, an accord which the RUF signed, then violated, and finally subverted by launching their recent attacks. RUF actions against the members of the United Nations peacekeeping force are outrageous and in direct violation of the Lomé Peace Agreement. Acting as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) withdrew, and before United Nations forces were fully deployed, the RUF acted in a deliberate, cynical manner to subvert and reverse the peace process.

The United States calls on the RUF immediately to release all detainees, cease all military operations, comply with its commitments under the Lomé Peace Agreement and respect all applicable norms of international human rights and humanitarian law. We concur with the view expressed by regional leaders at the ECOWAS Heads of State summit in Abuja on 9 May, condemning the actions of the RUF. We also note that ECOWAS heads of State warned the RUF leadership that "it runs the risk of revocation of the amnesty earlier granted to the members of the movement under the Lomé Peace Agreement, as well as being tried for war crimes if they continue to flout the Lomé Peace Agreement". We welcome the decision reached in Abuja to convene a special meeting of ECOWAS defence ministers on 17 May to consider the practical modalities should ECOMOG forces renew their involvement in Sierra Leone.

We commend and support the leadership demonstrated by the regional States and by ECOWAS in promoting political and diplomatic initiatives to stabilize the situation.

My Government is seized of this issue at the highest levels. Secretary Albright has been in regular contact with the Secretary-General. President Clinton also reviewed the situation with Mr. Annan this morning. We are consulting closely with the Secretariat.

President Clinton has asked the Reverend Jesse Jackson, his Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights in Africa, to return to the region to work with leaders there for a resolution of this crisis. Reverend Jackson has been actively involved in diplomatic efforts to help the people of Sierra Leone to realize their peaceful intentions.

We have intensified our continuing collaboration at the highest levels with the Government of Sierra Leone, with the United Nations in New York and Freetown, with other regional leaders and with our British colleagues. In that regard, we join others in acknowledging the United Kingdom's important contribution in securing Lungi

airport. Our Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Joseph Melrose, remains in Freetown and is in constant communication with the Government of Sierra Leone and other key officials.

Our focus continues to be on finding the best possible measures to seek the release of all United Nations and other international personnel who remain detained, to protect civilians, to restore stability and to reinforce the international presence in Sierra Leone.

The United States will assist the deployment of additional troops for UNAMSIL. We are working hard with other interested States to find ways to accelerate the deployment of remaining battalions. The United States is prepared to help transport additional troops to Sierra Leone.

We are also examining the possibilities of providing equipment support for the international forces there. We are now determining the kinds and quantities of equipment that can be most helpful. We are working to develop a coordinated approach with other members for delivery.

We intend to support the commitment West African nations have made to send additional troops to Sierra Leone and a United States military team is in Nigeria to determine what assistance may be needed. The United States remains committed to working in partnership with Africa. We will continue our efforts to support and strengthen African regional organizations and initiatives and their ongoing efforts to ensure peace and stability throughout the region.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): We are here to listen to the Secretary-General and to other delegations, especially those that represent African organizations such as the Organization of African Unity or the Economic Community of West African States, so I shall be very brief.

The Secretary-General stated very clearly that Mr. Sankoh must be held accountable and we have heard this echoed by all other speakers.

Last year, the signing of the Lomé Agreement was welcomed with a sense of relief. At last there seemed to be hope for peace in Sierra Leone. But parts of the Lomé Peace Agreement clearly did not bode well for future peace. Important Government posts were set aside for perpetrators of monstrous crimes, and a blanket amnesty was decreed for them with, almost unbelievably, a special amnesty provision for Mr. Sankoh.

The Netherlands delegation expressed its dismay at these provisions at the time because we felt they conveyed a dangerous message, namely, that committing unspeakable atrocities pays. We proposed to include a reference to our concerns in resolutions 1260 (1999) and 1270 (1999) but we were prevailed upon not to insist because any talk of accountability was likely to prolong the war.

Today, we can only wonder to what extent the international community's failure to insist on the Revolutionary United Front's accountability may have contributed to Mr. Sankoh's current foolhardiness. In any case, it must be clear that someone who flouts the Lomé Agreement cannot invoke that same Agreement as a basis for his impunity. The Lomé Agreement binds only the countries that are parties to it. The Security Council cannot deviate from what it has repeatedly and solemnly stated with regard to the need "to bring to justice, in an appropriate manner, individuals who incite or cause violence against civilians in situations of armed conflict or who otherwise violate international humanitarian and human rights law." (*S/PRST/1999/6*)

We continue to hold the view that without full accountability for the atrocities committed in Sierra Leone, no lasting peace can be established in that country.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting of the Security Council at the request of the African Group. We have supported such a meeting because we believe that the grave situation in Sierra Leone demands that the wider membership of the United Nations should openly discuss the emergency in that country. We thank the Secretary- General for his presence at today's meeting and for his important statement. We appreciate the valuable statements made by Algeria as the current Chair of the Organization of African Unity and by Mali as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Chairman, and fully support their recommendations.

Bangladesh is extremely concerned at the deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone. We see it as a challenge for the United Nations and for the international community as a whole.

The people of Sierra Leone have gone through nine years of suffering. The Lomé Peace Agreement promised an end to that. We had placed our trust in Lomé,

believing that it would work, and acted accordingly in mandating the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). With the recent developments in Sierra Leone, we have to take a fresh look at the peace structure and the peacekeeping mandate we had provided. We also have to rethink our strategy of placing too much emphasis on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leadership for reaching a peaceful solution in Sierra Leone.

We believe strongly that the United Nations cannot and must not abandon Sierra Leone. We must not wait on the sidelines as events unfold there. It would be a decisive setback to the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping if we allowed the largest peacekeeping mission ever to fail.

The question that we should address tonight is what should the Security Council do to effectively address the problem in Sierra Leone. We believe that we should pursue the following course of action.

First, we have to bolster UNAMSIL by bringing it up to its mandated strength at the earliest date. We continue to believe strongly that additional numbers on the ground would make a difference. In this regard, I would like to inform the Council that the battalion Bangladesh promised to UNAMSIL will be ready for airlifting along with all its equipment by 20 May.

Secondly, we have to look into the possibility of mobilizing more troops than the mandated strength. In this connection, Bangladesh is encouraged that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries will be providing forces to bring stability to Sierra Leone. We welcome the Abuja summit and the determined will of the ECOWAS members, expressed in the final communiqué of the meeting, to act to bring peace to Sierra Leone. We also thank other countries that have been forthcoming in this regard. On the basis of past experience in Sierra Leone, Bangladesh strongly believes that the entire international military presence there should be under an integrated United Nations command. There must be one international mandate provided by the Security Council.

Allow me to digress here to mention that concerns have been voiced in some quarters that United Nations peacekeeping is dysfunctional because the troops the United Nations deploys — troops mostly from the developing countries — are often ill- equipped, ill-trained and ill-prepared to address the situation at hand. The unfortunate reality is that if developing countries stopped responding to the frantic calls of the United Nations today, there would be no peacekeeping tomorrow, barring a few of the choicest areas in the world which are of significant strategic interest to major Powers. We should be grateful that developing countries continue to make contributions to United Nations peacekeeping. Their efforts alleviate the sufferings of millions around the world and uphold the United Nations Charter. Blaming the failure on the peacekeeper is the easy way out of fulfilling our collective responsibility.

We believe that in Sierra Leone, Force Commander General Jetley and his troops have faced the situation courageously and should have all our praise for their valiant efforts.

Thirdly, as soon as possible, we have to make a comprehensive assessment of the situation and weigh all options before us. We understand Mr. Bernard Miyet returned from Sierra Leone earlier today, and it would have been good if this meeting could have benefited from his preliminary assessment. However, we will expect a full assessment by the Secretariat and also recommendations of possible options at the earliest date.

Fourthly, we have to revisit the UNAMSIL mandate to strengthen it. Clearly we need a much more robust mandate for a long-term solution of the problem in Sierra Leone. Bangladesh believes that a full Chapter VII mandate for UNAMSIL is needed to make it effective.

Fifthly and finally, the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone is a matter of concern to us. United Nations agencies and international humanitarian organizations have suspended their operations, barring a few exceptions. There are distressing reports of population movements and atrocities committed against civilians. We have to look into ways to address the needs of the innocent victims of violence in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Let me thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting.

I wish to extend my delegation's condolences to the Governments and those families who lost people in Sierra Leone. Our thoughts are with those being detained by the rebels.

Let me also pay special tribute to the countries who have contributed troops to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Force Commander of UNAMSIL for their leadership and untiring efforts to keep the peace process on track under

the most adverse conditions. We also wish to salute the men and women of UNAMSIL for their courage under extremely difficult conditions.

The presence of the Secretary-General here tonight is appreciated by my delegation. We thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your statement, and we commend you for the efforts you are making to bring peace to Sierra Leone.

When we adopted resolution 1270 (1999) on 22 October last year, we did so, among other reasons, to commit the international community, and in particular United Nations Member States, to assist the people of Sierra Leone in restoring their democratically elected Government. Indeed, by resolution 1270 (1999) the Security Council acted to carry out its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

After the continuing long series of most brutal and barbaric atrocities that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) unleashed on the people of Sierra Leone — notably, children and even infants — the Government and people of Sierra Leone, who needed peace more than anything, accepted the Lomé Agreement. Indeed, we all had hoped that, given what the people of Sierra Leone were subjected to, the way to peace was not to isolate those who stood in the way of peace but to include them.

Today, the RUF has clearly demonstrated that it was never interested in peace. As a party to the conflict, the RUF did not have the political will to abide by the provisions of the Peace Agreement. They have, and continue to, openly and explicitly challenged the United Nations, if not embarrassing the international community. This we must not allow. Therefore the events in Sierra Leone should galvanize the international community to take effective measures to address this unfolding crisis. We must do so indeed because UNAMSIL is a collective undertaking. If it fails, it will be collective failure. When it succeeds, we all will have succeeded.

It must be stressed that UNAMSIL did not have the necessary deterrent capacity. The first test by the rebels confirmed the extreme vulnerability of the Mission. UNAMSIL was outnumbered and did not have the required equipment. The mandate of UNAMSIL was inadequate for the task at hand. We hesitated to set ourselves clear and realistic goals.

This is not an attempt to apportion blame, but rather an effort to establish why we went wrong. More importantly, however, we must exercise our collective responsibility in determining what we can do now, together, to put back on track the peace process in Sierra Leone. Of course, some have more capacity than others, but we must all act. In this connection, let me express our profound gratitude to the Government of the United Kingdom for sending troops to secure Lungi airport. Our thanks also go to all those Governments that have offered transportation to bring reinforcements to Sierra Leone.

The task before us is clear. The political realities on the ground and the continued detention of United Nations personnel demand that we review the mandate of UNAMSIL. In fact, the summit of the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) recently held in Abuja has facilitated our task. Namibia therefore fully supports a reinforced UNAMSIL. The strength of UNAMSIL must be boosted. The mandate of UNAMSIL must be brought fully under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, without modifications. Namibia welcomes the decision of ECOWAS to put ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops immediately at the disposal of UNAMSIL so that they can be integrated into the Mission.

Our collective responsibility demands that the strengthened UNAMSIL be augmented with the necessary equipment. Many troop-contributing countries do not have equipment that will make a Chapter VII mandate meaningful. Therefore, we appeal to those in a position to contribute equipment to UNAMSIL to come to the rescue of humanity and peace in Sierra Leone.

We cannot and must not abdicate our responsibility in Sierra Leone and pass it to ECOMOG. If we do, the least we can do is provide ECOMOG with financial and logistical support. To this end, we look forward to the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the speedy adoption of a relevant draft resolution.

We are already seeing mass population displacement, and unless we act, there is going to be a humanitarian crisis, given that many humanitarian workers have already been evacuated to neighbouring countries for safety.

We are grateful to all Member States who have committed their forces and made other contributions to the UNAMSIL operations in Sierra Leone. No doubt, the success or failure of UNAMSIL can have an impact on the future of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Notwithstanding this possibility, the crisis in Sierra Leone should not determine the future of peacekeeping operations in Africa. We must not fail the people of Africa, for this will have catastrophic consequences for international peace and security.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Firstly, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting in the form of an open debate. This will enhance the transparency of the deliberations of the Council and give us an opportunity to hear the opinions of other Members of the Organization, which will certainly be very helpful to us given the difficult situation with which we are confronted. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence with us during this debate.

Argentina reiterates unambiguously its total condemnation of the events unfolding in Sierra Leone. What is occurring in that country is very serious. A rebel movement characterized by its acts of atrocity is once again flouting the authority of the United Nations and is now arrogating to itself the power to disarm and deprive of their liberty entire contingents of the United Nations force deployed there.

Despite the fact that it had inflicted terrible suffering on its people, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was included in the negotiations that led to the Lomé Agreement. Despite the outrages committed by that rebel movement against the civilian population, the need to pacify the country led to tolerance being extended to its leaders, who escaped judgement and punishment by means of an amnesty.

All of these concessions were in vain. The Revolutionary United Front is now flouting the Lomé Agreement and the standards governing the protection of United Nations personnel. These violations and the taking of hostages are unacceptable and must not be tolerated. The leader of the RUF, Mr. Foday Sankoh, may have escaped responsibility, through the Lomé Agreement, for massive human rights violations in the past, but this time he must be held personally accountable for the acts committed by the irregular troops that he leads.

The Security Council must give a prompt and adequate response to this emergency. We cannot allow this situation to continue and the tragic acts of January 1999 to be repeated.

We wish to express our support to President Kabbah, the democratic legitimacy of his Government and the values of liberty and tolerance. The Government of Sierra Leone demonstrated these values when it asked the rebel forces to join in the dialogue and when it signed the Lomé Agreement. We must not forget that the ultimate solution to the problems that are afflicting the country must be political, not military.

Unfortunately, the good faith of President Kabbah's Government has not been reciprocated. From the start, we have been aware of the fact that United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) forces might have to confront a hostile environment, and, unfortunately, this has been confirmed by recent events. The current situation makes it even more necessary to strengthen UNAMSIL. We must speed up the transportation of the battalions that have been pledged in order to provide the required number of troops and the equipment needed to deal with the current situation. In this connection, I believe that we must wait until Under-Secretary-General Miyet, who has just returned from Sierra Leone, has conveyed to the Secretary-General his impressions of the situation on the ground, and the Secretary-General has communicated his conclusions to us.

However, we already support the Secretary-General's request to increase the number of troops to 11,100, as is provided for, if necessary, in the relevant resolution. But we stress that we must act as quickly as possible. This is a particularly difficult moment for Africa, and the evolution of events in Sierra Leone may have an impact on other conflicts in the region that are currently being considered by the Security Council, and we must not let that happen.

We do not wish to conclude without expressing Argentina's acknowledgement of the work of Under-Secretary-General Miyet, the staff of the United Nations Secretariat, especially the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Adeniji, and the States members of the Economic Community of West African States, for their work. We should also like to express our appreciation to the States that have contributed to UNAMSIL and to those that have continued to pledge their support as these tragic events have unfolded.

We should like in particular to offer our sincere condolences to the families of the members of UNAMSIL who have lost their lives or been deprived of their liberty. We should also like to thank United Kingdom for

its prompt dispatch of military forces to Sierra Leone to secure Lungi airport, which has surely contributed and will continue to contribute to making the task of UNAMSIL easier at such a difficult moment.

Finally, I should like to comment on the question of the necessity of changing the mandate through the adoption of a new resolution, an issue that has been raised earlier in the debate by several speakers. My delegation believes that it might be helpful to review again the question of the mandate, and we would not oppose any change in the mandate if it were necessary. But I should like to emphasize that at this time the mandate given to UNAMSIL in paragraph 10 of resolution 1289 (2000) is sufficiently strong to serve in present circumstances, particularly in it affirmation that UNAMSIL can take all necessary measures to guarantee the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation shares the concern over developments in the situation in Sierra Leone.

The activities of the fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have brought the peace process in that country to the brink of collapse. Today, when the air is heavy with renewed fighting in Sierra Leone, stirring up memories within the international community that have not even had time to fade — memories of acts of inconceivable cruelty with which the eight-year history of the conflict is rife — we call on the leadership of the RUF to think again, to cease violating the Lomé Peace Agreement and, together with other political forces in the country, to help overcome the consequences of this conflict. At the same, we deem it necessary to remind the RUF leaders that the amnesty provided for in the Lomé Peace Agreement does not extend to crimes committed after its signing.

Events in Sierra Leone have challenged the peacekeeping operation which the Security Council authorized in support of implementation by the parties of the commitments they freely agreed to in the Lomé Agreement. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has suffered losses. United Nations peacekeepers have been captured by bandits, as has been a Russian military observer. We convey our condolences to the families of those who have given their lives for peace in Sierra Leone, which has suffered so terribly. We firmly demand the release of detained United Nations and other international personnel.

The mandate given UNAMSIL in Security Council resolution 1289 (2000) allows sufficiently strong measures to be taken to ensure the safety of international personnel in the country and of the Government of Sierra Leone. Of key importance here is the effective exercise by the military contingent of its mandate. In this connection, we attach paramount importance to the speedy increase of the numbers of UNAMSIL to 11,100 soldiers and officers, as approved in resolution 1289 (2000). Russia and the United Nations are currently addressing the practical issues of providing an airlift to Sierra Leone for additional units being made available to UNAMSIL and of sending a number of Russian military helicopters to Sierra Leone.

We have no doubt that UNAMSIL — which, once fully deployed, will become the largest United Nations peacekeeping contingent — will be able to stabilize the situation in the country. This will create the necessary conditions for the Council calmly to consider the various options for overcoming the crisis in Sierra Leone. Without excluding any options, we continue to believe that no peacekeeping operation, including a peace-enforcement operation, can replace a political settlement of the conflict, which is possible only if the parties have the political will.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): The Jamaican delegation joins others in thanking you, Sir, for convening this meeting on the situation in Sierra Leone. We all agree that such a meeting is not only timely, but an imperative, given the urgency of the situation. We therefore commend the African Group for taking the initiative in calling for this meeting.

The statements of the Secretary-General and of the Permanent Representative of Algeria, acting as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, only served to underline the gravity of the threat that the crisis in Sierra Leone now poses to the people of that country, to the neighbouring countries and to the resolve of the international community.

After several years of civil strife, which wreaked untold havoc on the people of Sierra Leone, the Lomé accords held out the hope of peace and stability in which the country could at long last address its serious economic and social needs. It was only in February of this year that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was mandated by the Security Council to undertake the tasks of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; to coordinate and assist in the provision of

security in and at all sites in common areas of deployment with the Sierra Leone security forces; and, above all, to monitor the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement, which had been subscribed to by all parties concerned.

We commend those troops which went to Sierra Leone to serve the cause of peace and we wish to take this opportunity to express our condolences to the families of those who have given their lives. We join in condemning Mr. Foday Sankoh and the forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which have not only tried to scuttle the Lomé Peace Agreement, but have attacked and taken hostage those who sought to bring peace to the people of Sierra Leone. We join the call for the unconditional release of those detained and taken hostage and hold Mr. Sankoh fully accountable for the actions of the members of the RUF.

The Security Council and the international community have few options. Our priority must be to obtain the release of those detained and held hostage and to stabilize the situation so that order can be re-established throughout Sierra Leone. The present outbreak of hostilities has again put the lives of civilians at risk and threatens the stability of the neighbouring States.

It is against this background that my delegation strongly supports the call of the heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for UNAMSIL's mandate to be revised under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and for the troops to be equipped to carry out such a mandate. We wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the troop-contributing countries, including Bangladesh, India and Jordan, which have pledged to rapidly increase the troop strength of UNAMSIL to its authorized level, and also to thank those countries which are providing strategic airlifts. We also commend the action of the British Government in stabilizing the situation in the Lungi airport area, as this has provided a valuable complement to the work of UNAMSIL.

While we are fully aware that there is no clear-cut solution, my delegation fully endorses the options put forth by ECOWAS, which call, *inter alia*, for the integration of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops into UNAMSIL, and call upon the international community to commit the necessary funding and logistical expertise as required. We also look forward to the outcome of the meeting of the Ministers of Defence and Chiefs of Staff of ECOWAS, to be held in Abuja on 17 May, to consider practical modalities. We cannot forget that it was the troops of ECOMOG who acted to stabilize the situation and to bring peace to the people of Sierra Leone, which allowed for the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement. The Council will also benefit from the report of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bernard Miyet, who was just in Sierra Leone to assess the political and military realities.

There is one option that we do not have, and that is to abandon the people of Sierra Leone, who are looking to this Organization in their hour of need. As I said earlier, civilians are again on the move in Sierra Leone, becoming refugees in their own country, and have moved into neighbouring countries. International humanitarian agencies have had to scale down their activities and normal life has been disrupted across the land.

In the next few days and weeks, this Council and the international community must display its resolve, stated in this very Chamber just three months ago, to support the people of that war-torn country who yearn for peace.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to the Force Commander and to the men and women of UNAMSIL and to those humanitarian workers who serve in Sierra Leone for their dedication to the cause of peace.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Today's emergency meeting of the Security Council is yet another clear indication of the gravity of the situation in Sierra Leone, underlining the imperative need to take rapid, well-considered, resolute and adequate action in response to the dangerous developments in that African country. Our discussion today has to have a large perspective, not limited exclusively to the situation on the ground. The larger context should underscore the overall credibility and authority of the United Nations and its role in conflict resolution. We hope that the convening of this meeting at the initiative of African States will enable us to take the right decision.

Ukraine is gravely concerned over the current crisis in the peace process in Sierra Leone. We maintain that the responsibility for this lies entirely with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and its leadership. We also strongly condemn the hostile actions, which are absolutely unacceptable, against United Nations peacekeepers. All those responsible should be held accountable for their criminal acts. In its official declaration issued on 6 May, the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Ukraine demanded the immediate and unharmed release of all detained United Nations personnel. Our delegation strongly reiterates this demand addressed to the Revolutionary United Front.

Ensuring the safety and security of the peacekeeping personnel in Sierra Leone is of utmost importance. At the same time, another urgent task facing the United Nations is that of preventing the crisis from growing into a new war in that country. Given the current situation on the ground, as well as the real threat of recurrence of large-scale fighting, we strongly believe that it is incumbent on the organ entrusted with the primary responsibility for peace and security to take all appropriate steps at its disposal aimed at bringing the peace process in Sierra Leone back on track.

Our immediate attention should be focused on the following priorities: to free all United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and other international staff detained, to stabilize the situation on the ground and to reinforce United Nations troops.

We would like to express our high appreciation to the United Kingdom Government for its quick and prompt decision to dispatch a British military contingent in order to secure the strategic Lungi airport.

Today the membership of the United Nations is unanimous in its assessment that political measures alone are likely to fail in bringing about the desirable effect. Against this background, we believe that the Security Council should take tougher measures — that is, peace enforcement. In this connection, among the conceivable options our strong preference will be the substantial reinforcement of the current UNAMSIL by increasing its combat capabilities. This would require reconsidering the current mandate of UNAMSIL, which has to be brought entirely under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, UNAMSIL should be properly equipped as soon as possible so as to be able to act accordingly. All forces to be involved in the operation should perform their functions under the United Nations chain of command.

With regard to the issue of the revised mandate of UNAMSIL, I would like to recall here one very pertinent recommendation from the Carlsson Inquiry into the United Nations actions during the genocide in Rwanda. This recommendation stated the following:

> "The overriding concern in formulating mandates must be what presence is needed on the ground, not short-term financial constraints. The Security Council should be presented with proposals reflecting the real needs of a mission, not ones tailored to a previously perceived consensus. Mandates must be robust enough already from the beginning of a mission." (*S/1999/1257, enclosure, p. 56*)

United Nations Member States are looking forward to this kind of proposal from the United Nations Secretariat.

We believe that the substantial strengthening of UNAMSIL, even without giving it the task of forcibly disarming the rebels, will demonstrate to the RUF that there will be no option but to lay down its arms and fulfil its obligations under the Lomé Agreement. Furthermore, the strengthening of UNAMSIL would deter rebels from further humiliating actions against peacekeepers.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm Ukraine's willingness to continue making its own contribution to the United Nations peacemaking efforts in Sierra Leone. In particular, Ukraine has already been involved in providing airlift support for the needs of UNAMSIL.

Mr. Levitte (France) *(spoke in French)*: It is very good that the Security Council has held this open meeting, upon the request of the African Group, to express strongly the feeling and the solidarity of the entire international community vis-à-vis the crisis in Sierra Leone. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his analysis of the situation and ask him to be so kind as to convey to Mr. Bernard Miyet and the entire Secretariat team our thanks for having mobilized to such an extent during this ordeal. But, first and foremost, our thoughts go out to the men of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) who are still being held hostage. This evening the entire international community must say to all those who are holding them, and especially to Foday Sankoh, "Let them go! Let them do their job! The United Nations will not accept the unacceptable. It will not back down. It has a job to do, and it will do it."

Tonight is the time for solidarity. Tonight is the time to say no. The initial operational measures taken by General Jetley show the determination of UNAMSIL to gather itself, to shore itself up, not to shrink from carrying out its mandate. France will support any proposal of the Secretary-General to reinforce UNAMSIL with Blue Helmets that he deems appropriate. It

welcomes the speedy intervention of the United Kingdom. It stands ready to think about reviewing the mandate of the force to take into account the unilateral breaking of the Lomé Agreement by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

Tonight Mr. Foday Sankoh and all of the RUF officials must understand that they have no option but to fully respect and implement the Lomé Peace Agreement. France reaffirms its support for the democratically elected authorities of Sierra Leone who are cooperating with the United Nations in an exemplary way. It calls upon the RUF to resume cooperation without delay.

We must not forget that in Sierra Leone, as well as elsewhere in Africa, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, diamonds in particular, feeds the forces of war. In Sierra Leone, as in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations must react by setting up a monitoring system and by taking strict measures to dry up the financing that enables the RUF to continue its war effort. France calls upon our Council to act decisively in this area.

Above and beyond the immediate reactions of determination and firmness that we must evince together, our Council must think along with the Secretary-General about longer-term lessons that we should draw from this crisis. The first lesson is that there is no way whatsoever to establish peace if all the parties to a conflict are not resolved to do so. To achieve this objective, and together with any deployment of a force, international pressure at all levels must be maintained on all the actors in the crisis.

The second lesson is that there must be true cohesiveness, a measure of genuine effectiveness, between the mandate of a force and the size, training and equipment of the contingents responsible for implementation. Let us acknowledge today that this was not sufficiently the case for UNAMSIL.

But in addition to learning those two lessons, we must refrain from hastily confusing different issues. The Sierra Leone crisis inevitably casts a dark shadow on United Nations commitment in Africa. France states firmly that each crisis has its own characteristics. The crisis that gathers us here today must not prevent us from acting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or elsewhere in Africa. That is the conclusion that I can draw without hesitation from the extended mission to the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa from which six other Council members and I have just returned.

France pays tribute to current efforts by all the African heads of State concerned, including those of Mali, Nigeria, Guinea and Liberia, to bring Foday Sankoh and the other leaders of the RUF to their senses. The entire United Nations stands with Africa to restore peace in Sierra Leone as it does to help the continent overcome each of its crises, fully taking into account their individual characteristics.

This evening, let us together reaffirm our determination, our solidarity and our commitment, side by side with our African partners, first and foremost with the long-suffering people of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wish at the outset to thank you for convening this emergency meeting and for your speedy response to the request from the African group that the meeting be held forthwith. We feel certain that this debate will enable us to hear the ideas of many Members of the Organization about how to react most effectively to the dreadful crisis in Sierra Leone, which could at any moment deteriorate further and drift beyond control.

We are sincerely grateful to the Secretary-General for his intensive efforts and for the important statement he made here this evening.

I wish also to pay tribute to the soldiers who have given their lives for peace, and to convey the condolences of the Government and the people of Tunisia to the Governments and the families of those who have been killed in so cowardly a way. Further, my Government thanks those who have contributed troops in Sierra Leone, and the troops of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), who continue to face a tense situation.

Tunisia strongly condemns the actions of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and of its leader, Mr. Foday Sankoh, in deliberate violation of the Lomé Peace Agreement, an agreement they freely signed. These actions must not go unpunished; the amnesty specified in the Peace Agreement must be revisited, given the unacceptable acts perpetrated by the RUF and the unacceptable conduct of its leader, Mr. Sankoh, who has acted against peace and has thus barred his own people from relief from the suffering they have been facing for so long.

I reiterate my country's full support for the Lomé Agreement, and for United Nations efforts, regional efforts by ECOWAS and international efforts aimed at getting the peace process back on track. In that connection, my delegation fully endorses the conclusions, decisions and recommendations of the summit of ECOWAS heads of State, who met on 9 May at Abuja concerning the Lomé Agreement on Sierra Leone. We believe that these recommendations are an appropriate response to the current crisis, which hangs so heavily over the future of Sierra Leone, and that they merit Security Council support with a view to responding in a manner commensurate with the gravity of the crisis, which could further deteriorate at any moment.

The Security Council must face up to the situation decisively; it must emerge with its credibility strengthened. The international community must demonstrate even greater solidarity with the Government and the people of Sierra Leone to ensure peace, progress and democracy in that country and to provide the United Nations with the resources needed to discharge its mandate. We must, without further delay, strengthen the mandate of UNAMSIL and reinforce its troops, authorizing the use of ECOWAS troops as soon as possible; the mandate must include a peacemaking dimension. For effective implementation, sufficient equipment and appropriate financial and logistical support must also be given to the peacekeeping force, which would of course be under UNAMSIL command.

Given the urgency of the situation, it remains crucially important that all detainees be released immediately and unconditionally and that the additional troops made available to UNAMSIL by Bangladesh, India and Jordan be deployed rapidly; Africa thanks those countries most sincerely.

The crisis in Sierra Leone stirs up sore memories of United Nations experience elsewhere in Africa. We must apply the lessons learned from that experience to the handling of the Sierra Leone crisis. That crisis must also cause us to reflect in depth on peacekeeping and international security in general. We must also consider the human and financial problems raised, along with the question of the correct approach to each operation, to ensure the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations and to prevent harmful setbacks.

The present situation has brought far too much suffering to the people of Sierra Leone; they expect full support from the international community. The international community must not abandon them.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

Many other Council members have expressed all of what I would have wanted to say, so I shall try to make my statement as brief as possible.

The Chinese delegation is deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone. We support the efforts of the international community, and in particular of the countries and regional organizations concerned, to defuse the crisis in Sierra Leone. We also convey our appreciation to the Secretariat for its work in that connection. We appeal to the international community to continue to provide a range of emergency assistance to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

Like other delegations, we believe that the Security Council should adopt appropriate measures with respect to the situation in Sierra Leone, including a review of the mandate of UNAMSIL and the adoption of measures to ensure that that mandate is fully implemented. We expect the Secretariat to formulate recommendations in that regard as soon as possible for consideration by the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Sierra Leone, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the important function of directing the affairs of the Security Council during the month of May. We also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Fowler of Canada.

We would also like to thank you and the other members of the Council for the interest which this organ has demonstrated so far in response to the disturbing developments in Sierra Leone over the past several days. We note in particular your two statements to the media, as well as the presidential statement which you made on behalf of the Council last Thursday.

Every individual, irrespective of nationality, race or creed, has an inalienable right to the safety and security

of his or her person. The Government of Sierra Leone, consistent with its constitutional and moral responsibility, has always been concerned with efforts to ensure the safety and security not only of its own citizens, but also of people of other nationalities — humanitarian workers, peace observers, Secretariat staff and others — who have left their own homes and families to assist us in one way or another to safeguard the welfare of Sierra Leoneans.

This is why President Kabbah has conveyed to the Secretary-General and to the heads of State of affected troop contributing countries the sympathy and concern of the Government and people of Sierra Leone for the tragic and criminal acts perpetrated by RUF rebels on the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). My delegation would like to reiterate our shock and dismay at the sad turn of events and to reassure you, Mr. Secretary-General, and the troop contributors that the Government of Sierra Leone stands ready to provide all necessary assistance to ensure that the UNAMSIL peacekeepers who are still illegally detained by armed rebel elements are released immediately and unharmed. My Government would like to express its gratitude to the Governments of troop contributing countries for their decision to keep their troops in Sierra Leone, notwithstanding these unfortunate incidents. The people of Sierra Leone are indeed grateful.

Much has been said about the obvious disappointment of the people of Sierra Leone at the events of the past days. Their immediate or initial reaction to those events was not unexpected. It was based on their perception and expectation of the role of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone. As far as they are concerned, UNAMSIL is in Sierra Leone to replace the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). I need not remind the Council that the average person in Sierra Leone, and in the world at large, does not know the difference between Chapter VI and VII of the United Nations Charter. He or she does not know exactly who in the United Nations, be it the Force Commander on the ground or the Secretary-General, should give UNAMSIL the green light to take appropriate action when elements of RUF rebels decide to take matters into their own hands and resort to violence.

Much has been said about failures and credibility. Much has also been said about the impact that these latest events in Sierra Leone could have on the future of United Nations peacekeeping in Africa and other parts of the world. We have also heard and read a lot about who should or should not be blamed. It is the view of my Government that it is about time we move ahead. It is about time we move ahead because the situation in Sierra Leone is still serious. It is still a threat to international peace and security. It is a situation that the Security Council must resolutely address as a matter of urgency.

Today, we would like to appeal to the Security Council, as the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, to take the lead in ensuring the safety and security of the people of Sierra Leone and those whom the Council deployed to give effect to its mandatory decisions on Sierra Leone.

For their part, the heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States members of the committee on Sierra Leone, in their communiqué issued in Abuja on Tuesday, have, among other things, reaffirmed that UNAMSIL's presence in Sierra Leone is not only in accordance with the Lomé Peace Agreement, but is also supported by the Security Council. Therefore, UNAMSIL must be allowed to freely operate throughout the territory of Sierra Leone without hindrance.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes current initiatives to strengthen UNAMSIL through the rapid deployment of additional troops. We hope that this process will be expedited in order to avoid any deterioration of a situation which, we are happy to report, continues to improve to the extent that civilians can now go about their business without hindrance. We expect the Council to consider its options and to take appropriate and effective measures — I emphasize the word "effective" — to deal with the new situation that has emerged in our country. The Government of Sierra Leone still has faith in the United Nations and in the ability of the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter.

In closing, I would like to quote the following excerpts from the latest official communiqué issued by the Government of Sierra Leone earlier today:

> "Government wishes to reiterate its continued commitment to the Lomé Peace Agreement, which it views as a key step in the achievement of sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. In the first place, Government is convinced that the people of Sierra Leone and the international community are generally in support of the provisions of the Agreement. Secondly, the continued involvement of the international community in Sierra Leone is

contingent upon the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

"While acknowledging that the RUF has seriously violated the provisions of the Agreement, Government still believes that the Agreement is generally implementable. Government is also aware that a large proportion of the members of the RUF were not in support of the abductions of UNAMSIL personnel and the refusal by Foday Sankoh to voluntarily disarm his combatants. They are fed up with war and want the country to move ahead. Government therefore urges all those RUF members interested in sustainable peace in Sierra Leone to take advantage of the amnesty granted them under the Lomé Peace Agreement, and cooperate with Government in the continued implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Failure to do so will result in the amnesty being forfeited. This will result in their being declared war criminals, with all the consequences flowing from that, including being hunted around the world. This is in line with the position taken in Abuja on 9 May by the ECOWAS heads of State members of the Committee on Sierra Leone of the Lomé Peace Agreement."

My delegation hopes that the Council will find this statement issued by the Government of Sierra Leone useful in the Council's current deliberations and in considering possible options for immediate action to deal with the situation in our country.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): First of all, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I seize this opportunity to wish you success as President of the Security Council for the current month.

Allow me also to express my solidarity with the intervention just made by the representative of Sierra Leone.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland associate themselves with this statement.

As stated immediately after the crisis began, the European Union strongly condemns the attacks and actions taken by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone in direct violation of the Lomé Peace Agreement and is highly concerned by the reports of continuing inadmissible military movements by the RUF.

We firmly condemn the reported killing of personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and continue to be deeply disturbed by the totally unacceptable detention of hundreds of its military and civilian personnel. The European Union deplores the fact that the ongoing crisis brought more suffering to the already beleaguered civilian population. The European Union believes that all those responsible for these actions should be made accountable.

The European Union calls on the Revolutionary United Front, and in particular Foday Sankoh, who as its leader has major responsibilities in the ongoing deplorable crisis, to cease immediately all attacks, to release all detainees safely and unconditionally and to recommit themselves to the full implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's mission to Sierra Leone, headed by Under-Secretary-General Bernard Miyet, to assess the situation in the field. It fully appreciates and supports the efforts being undertaken by the United Nations to solve the current crisis.

The European Union believes that UNAMSIL is facing a serious emergency and strongly encourages all States in a position to do so to assist and provide the means deemed necessary for the accomplishment of its mandate. The European Union notes that UNAMSIL has authority, under Chapter VII of the Charter, to use force to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and to protect civilians, where possible.

In this context, the European Union pays tribute to all troop contributors and welcomes and supports efforts already made to speed up the deployment of the remaining three battalions from India, Jordan and Bangladesh, which will join the UNAMSIL peacekeeping contingent. We welcome the efforts made by those countries offering logistical assistance to this operation.

The European Union stresses that one of its member States, the United Kingdom, as recognized by previous speakers, has made an important military contribution, particularly at Lungi Airport.

The United Nations is again facing a major challenge in Africa and should not fail. Firm and sustained action by UNAMSIL and the international community as a whole is needed to bring the peace process back on track.

The European Union reiterates that the active engagement of regional leaders is especially critical to bring this crisis to an end and restore stability in Sierra Leone. In this regard we welcomed the summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) heads of States in Abuja on 9 May, which reaffirmed total ECOWAS support to restore peace in Sierra Leone.

Finally, let me echo the words of the Secretary-General here tonight. In this crisis, let us back words with deeds, and mandates with resources needed to make them work.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Brattskar (Norway): The deeply troubling turn of events in Sierra Leone warrants urgent attention and requires the best efforts of the international community.

Norway condemns in the strongest terms the detention of the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and calls for their immediate, safe and unconditional release. Those responsible for these actions, including RUF leader Foday Sankoh, must be held accountable.

A Norwegian military observer, Commander Gjellestad, is held captive somewhere in Sierra Leone, with no confirmed reports on his whereabouts or health. We are deeply concerned about his fate, as well as that of other detainees, United Nations personnel and that of the people of Sierra Leone, who has suffered so much in recent years. The United Nations should have as its highest priority to obtain the release of the detainees held by the RUF. We therefore welcome the establishment of a special team within the UNAMSIL headquarters, working towards this end.

Norway supports the efforts by the United Nations and UNAMSIL to restore peace in Sierra Leone and to fulfil the mission's mandate, including the protection of civilians. We also express our support for the regional and international efforts under way to resolve the crisis, including those by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Norway is considering ways to support the United Nations in addressing the difficult problems ahead, and we urge others to extend all possible support to the mission.

Norway deplores the blatant violations of the Lomé Peace Agreement by the RUF and calls upon its leadership to implement the provisions of this agreement in full, including cooperation in implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.

Lessons from other conflicts have taught us the importance of rebuilding viable administrative structures and civil society, with the support of the international community, in order to move from an initial cease-fire to sustainable peace. Norway has contributed to this in Sierra Leone through the support of several initiatives, such as the DDR programme. Altogether, we have pledged or allocated some $5 million to projects in Sierra Leone for the current fiscal year. In the present situation, the future of these projects is uncertain, and we have been forced to withdraw all our civilian personnel in charge of humanitarian aid from Sierra Leone.

In the search for a long-term solution to this conflict, high priority should be given to curbing arms supplies and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. These weapons undermine the security of civilians and threaten the safety of international peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel. The present situation highlights the importance of initiatives such as the moratorium on small arms in West Africa, an initiative Norway has actively supported. In a similar vein, we underscore the importance of regulating sources of income that fuel civil strife in Africa, such as the trade in diamonds and other precious minerals.

Norway remains firmly committed to peace and development in Africa. These past months we have seen how the work to build peace and a better future for women, children and men in many parts of the continent has been reversed by armed conflict and unrest. At this critical juncture, the international community must not turn its back on Africa, but redouble its support for the efforts to ensure sustainable peace and development on the continent.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President, for calling this open meeting on the crisis in Sierra Leone.

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was set up on the assumption that all parties to the conflict in Sierra Leone had at last decided to resolve their differences peacefully through the Lomé Peace Agreement, which they had all freely accepted. UNAMSIL was despatched to help implement the Agreement through its impartial and reassuring presence and by taking charge of the process of voluntary demobilization and disarmament, which was absolutely essential to pave the way for a lasting peace.

It now appears from recent events that the leadership of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) had no intentions of honouring their commitments under the Agreement. The tensions, which, from the actions of their cadres, started to build up from late last month, have now erupted into a full-scale crisis, whose immediate brunt is being borne by the people of Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL's peacekeepers, but which will have far wider repercussions.

The leaders of the region have individually and collectively denounced these actions of the RUF and of their leader, Mr. Foday Sankoh. Unfortunately, that has had no visible effect so far. There are unconfirmed reports that Mr. Sankoh may have received sanctuary. If so, we trust that those to whom he is beholden, or who have influence upon him, will also persuade him to call off immediately the military action that he has started, to release the UNAMSIL personnel he has taken hostage and to commit himself again to the Lomé Agreement. We expect the Security Council to pronounce itself forcefully on this matter, making it clear to the leadership of the RUF that the international community is united in its condemnation of their actions.

What then? There are two options that seem to be the obvious ones, which have been spoken about in the corridors and mooted in the media, but which we would strongly advise against. The first is to wind down and withdraw. UNAMSIL was sent to Sierra Leone to keep a peace that has unravelled, and it could be argued that if the people of Sierra Leone do not want peace, the United Nations can hardly impose it upon them. That, of course, would be terribly unfair to the people of Sierra Leone, who are the victims of this violence, not its cause. In Rwanda in 1994, in a comparable crisis, when peacekeepers came under threat, the United Nations decided to abandon the operation, with consequences that no one would wish to see repeated.

Certainly, even though India has troops on the ground, we have no intention of pulling out, and we very strongly urge the Council not to consider this as an option. We are in fact sending a second battalion urgently, together with other reinforcements, to bolster UNAMSIL's strength.

The second option, which might seem logical if the first is rejected, is to change UNAMSIL's mandate immediately into peace enforcement, under a Chapter VII operation. However, we would like the Council to bear in mind that UNAMSIL presently does not have the troops, the equipment or the logistics needed to mount a peace-enforcement operation. Giving UNAMSIL a mandate it cannot implement will not help it; it might even compound its difficulties in two ways. On the ground, if the RUF goes on an all-out offensive in retaliation, UNAMSIL, and particularly the hostages, might suffer heavy and needless casualties. Politically, critics of the United Nations will argue that even with a Chapter VII mandate the United Nations has been able to do nothing.

Therefore, we would say that the question of a change in UNAMSIL's mandate is one that the Council may wish to keep under review, in the light of developments. In this event, we expect that troop contributors will be associated in the Council's decision-making process, in the spirit of Article 44 of the Charter.

There are some who believe that the United Nations cannot do what needs to be done now in Sierra Leone and that force should be deployed and used by others, with the blessings of the Security Council. As long as UNAMSIL is in place, we cannot warn too strongly against this. Somalia showed us the dangers inherent in forces outside United Nations command taking military action in a theatre where peacekeepers are deployed. Both the backlash and the blame for failure fall on the United Nations and its Blue Helmets.

In the current crisis, it is essential to preserve the unity of command of UNAMSIL, and it must function as a cohesive force. Undermining the leadership of UNAMSIL is fraught with dangerous consequences for the Mission as a whole and of the troops under its command.

In our opinion, UNAMSIL needs to consolidate. In present circumstances, it clearly cannot implement many of the tasks given to it. Little in the way of humanitarian assistance is being provided; the providers have left. Nor can UNAMSIL keep thoroughfares open when it is itself under siege. It is spread out all over the country, showing the United Nations flag, but this also means that its soldiers are dispersed in penny packets, trying to do a job that presently cannot be done.

With the professional and well-equipped reinforcements that are coming in, UNAMSIL must concentrate on measures that would make it impossible for power, or the institutions of government in Freetown, to be seized by force. It already has a Chapter VII mandate to provide security at key locations and Government buildings and to use force in self-defence. The rules of engagement are clear. If all units in UNAMSIL act with discipline and courage in accordance with the mandate that they already have, they will be able to serve the United Nations and the people of Sierra Leone well.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate, that, as we have always done in other difficult peacekeeping operations in which we have participated, India will stay the course. I will share with members of the Council the fact that this decision has not been easy to take. It is not an easy matter to answer the question why the lives of Indian soldiers should be put at risk in an operation that currently has some serious weaknesses and imponderables. To the question, what interests are we defending in Sierra Leone, we have said that we are there, and must stay there, for two reasons. First, because to leave now would be to abandon the people of Sierra Leone to a terrible fate, and secondly, because the credibility of the United Nations is at stake. We believe those are also the two considerations uppermost on the Council's mind.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): Japan has requested this opportunity to participate in this meeting because of its deep concern over the deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone. My delegation joins the previous speakers in condemning the violence by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), particularly its brutal attacks against unarmed civilians and United Nations peacekeepers. We demand that the RUF stop its hostile actions and that it release unharmed the hundreds of peacekeepers it has taken hostage.

The danger that the hostilities could escalate once again into a full-blown civil war is very real. Japan's concern is further compounded by the fact that the situation in Sierra Leone could have grave implications for the future of United Nations peacekeeping operations as a whole, and particularly for those in Africa.

It is therefore imperative that the international community respond quickly and effectively. The actions it takes must be determined by decisions of the Security Council, as prescribed by the United Nations Charter.

Whether to expand the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone to include the task of peace enforcement by incorporating the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) into the United Nations mission, or whether to entrust peace enforcement to ECOMOG itself, is for the Council to decide. What is most important is for the Security Council to respond promptly, before the situation deteriorates further.

I can assure you, Mr. President, that Japan will continue to support the decisions of the Security Council on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list it the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting on the crisis in Sierra Leone. I am taking the floor in my capacity as Coordinator of the Eastern Africa subregion.

Ostensibly, we are here today to urgently consider the abrupt and shocking deterioration of the peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone. It is stunning to witness the blatant attacks on peacekeepers and the capture of hundreds of them and even to hear about the unconfirmed deaths of a few. We express our deep sympathies to those families and countries that have lost peacekeepers and to those who are still looking for certain of their loved ones, whether they are detained or cannot be accounted for. We are, indeed, at the juncture of what I believe will be one of the most important decisions of our age for the international community. The standoff in Sierra Leone represents an all too familiar test of wills between the United Nations and yet another warlord. It remains to be seen whether the United Nations will be able to contain the actions of rebels who seem determined

to unravel any peace agreement that they have accepted. Given the recent increase in peacekeeping commitments to Africa by the United Nations, the outcome will have significant meaning for Africa.

The peace pact in Sierra Leone must rest not only on good intentions and trust but also on force. Sierra Leone is in serious danger of being mired in violence again, with the looming possibility that it will turn into another Somalia, a State that for a decade now has been run by bands of warlords. We cannot abandon Sierra Leone; to do so would not only send the wrong signal to Africa but would be untenable and, indeed, unacceptable to the international community.

Later this year, the world will observe a Millennium Summit held here at the United Nations, where we will explore the themes of peace and security, including disarmament, development, poverty eradication, human rights and the strengthening of the United Nations. In Sierra Leone, elements of each of these issues are in play and, to an enormous extent, the manner in which we as an international community resolve these immediate issues in that wretched and frightening place will define the relevance of these issues for a large segment of humanity.

In many respects, we might almost set our computers to substitute, in each sentence, the word "Africa" for "Sierra Leone", for it is unlikely that we will be prepared to do much more anywhere on the continent than in that country. For a myriad of reasons, Africa is currently plagued by an infestation of criminal-minded warlords, rogues for whom peace, human rights and lawful government are viewed as illogical obstructions to their self-interest.

This is clearly the case in Sierra Leone, Angola and Somalia — and the list goes on. For nearly a decade, the rebels have adopted a strategy of cruelty to frighten the country into submission. With its limited resources, the Government of Sierra Leone, at the behest of other influential parties, has had little choice but to agree to a peace accord. Despite years of crimes against humanity, a legacy of atrocities that will characterize Sierra Leone in the minds of the rest of the world for ages, and the virtual destruction of the country's youth, the rebels were absolved of punishment, given key ministerial posts in the Government and a lifestyle which they could never before have imagined. The only trade-off expected of the rebels was that they would abide by the terms of the peace accord and disarm, under the supervision of United Nations peacekeepers. Unfortunately, these peacekeepers lack the right mandate and are lightly armed, ill-equipped, poorly coordinated and outmanned — a reflection of an attempt at peacekeeping on the cheap that is tragically laughable when set against the mammoth efforts in power, arms and resources seen in Kosovo, East Timor or Bosnia. In hindsight, it was clearly a mistake to agree to such an accord and to attempt to appease the rebels at such a cost. But what, it must be asked, was the alternative? Sadly, it was not the first capitulation to warlords in Africa.

This is, in many respects, the situation we have seen in Somalia. With its own decade of destruction at the hands of its warlords, Somalia has not had a Government for a long time. Yet now, when an overwhelming national consensus is emerging, and when the vast majority of Somalis have united for peace, the warlords continue to obstruct peace and deny the country the peace and development it so obviously craves and needs. There is now a promising peace conference on Somalia under way in Djibouti, yet somehow the warlords are tolerated while they continue making noises against this clear progress and are being supported in their endeavours by a nefarious few. The international community must warn these warlords that they must accept the peace which Somali civil society clearly desires, or else face the consequences, and it must take to task those who continue to assist them in their unending adventures. Here again, their ill-gotten economic gain in a lawless environment no doubt exceeds what they perceive as being possible in a stable situation. That is why, for them, the lawless environment has to be made much worse than the prospects of a peaceful one.

As in Somalia, Angola, the Congo and elsewhere in Africa, we are thus at a crossroad in terms of how we, as an international community, are to respond in Sierra Leone. To his credit, the Secretary-General has waged a long campaign to re-engage the international community in Africa's conflicts in the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We all know how agonizing this setback in Sierra Leone is to him. He is right: Africa must not be marginalized and left on its own to solve its problems without outside assistance. Sierra Leone is therefore a signal of the level of international concern for peace and security, including disarmament, in Africa. As is the case throughout the continent, the eagerness to monopolize the diamond trade stands in stark contrast to the pervasive poverty in the country and its lack of development.

Africa is prepared to undertake a regional response to this crisis in Sierra Leone, but, as all Council members know, it lacks the resources to complete the task. At the same time, as all members know, rebel units there have the advantage of controlling the lucrative diamond mines through which they are able to finance their hostilities. As I said earlier, Sierra Leone is not alone in its difficulties with hostile rebel groups, which require an effective response to end the nightmare of suffering that the common people of that hapless country have endured.

Finally, we must try to make the arms embargo more effective and also promote regional peacemaking. In the absence of Africa's imposing overwhelming strength on its rebel forces that oppose democratic governance, it must rely upon collective security, as enshrined in the Charter, to bring about lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): May I, too, begin by thanking you, Sir, for presiding over this open debate on the developments in Sierra Leone.

I would like to join other speakers in expressing our deepest condolences to the families of four Kenyan soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty. Our sympathies are also with those peacekeepers who are being held hostage by the forces of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF). One of them belongs to Pakistan.

We note with appreciation the courage and commitment demonstrated by the peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, particularly those still held hostage. The RUF must release the hostages immediately and unconditionally.

We are extremely disturbed at the unfortunate turn of events in Sierra Leone, raising questions as to the effectiveness of the peace efforts of the United Nations and the determination of the international community. There is a need to demonstrate wisdom and commitment in dealing with the evolving situation. The only recourse to a viable peace is to implement the Peace Agreement signed in Lomé on 7 July 1999. The international community supported the peace process in Sierra Leone, as reflected in Security Council resolution 1289 (2000) of 7 February this year.

It is our understanding that resolution 1289 (2000) clearly describes the ways and means of dealing with the challenges of the type and magnitude that have now emerged in Freetown and in other parts of the country. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in paragraph 10 of the resolution the Security Council authorized the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to undertake some additional tasks in the light of conditions on the ground, including, first, to provide security at key locations; secondly, to facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance; and thirdly, to guard weapons and military equipment collected from ex-combatants. In the discharge of these tasks, the peacekeepers were mandated to take the necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of UNAMSIL personnel and, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

The question now arises as to whether UNAMSIL took the necessary measures to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel or to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat. The answer is in the negative. It seems that, while an adequate mandate has been given to the Mission to address such situations as hostage-taking, the peacekeepers deployed on the ground are not adequately equipped to act as per the mandate. There has to be a balance and linkage between the mandate, composition of forces and operational posture adopted in the field. We could not possibly expect the lightly armed infantry battalions deployed in Sierra Leone to implement such robust mandates while maintaining the right posture. The Secretariat needs to assess what went wrong in the planning and deployment of peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, including the configuration of the force. It is all the more important to ensure that, in future, the security component of a peacekeeping mission serve as an asset rather than become a liability.

While urging proper review and corrective measures by the Security Council and the Secretariat with a view to making the peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone operational again, we would like to emphasize the need to avoid repeating similar mistakes in other missions, including the one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Pakistan has committed one battalion group for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like to see a practical concept of operation and configuration of force there in a manner that is capable of supporting the implementation of the mandate of the Mission and such that its success does not depend only on the declared intentions of the parties involved in the conflict.

Pakistan has always emphasized the point that the international community's commitment to the promotion of peace in Africa will be judged by its seriousness in translating rhetoric into reality. We should not be found wanting in generating the necessary political will to turn words into deeds.

The time has come to reiterate our collective commitment to peace efforts in Africa. We cannot allow the peace process in Sierra Leone to fail, despite invoking Chapter VII elements in the mandate of the Security Council. There cannot be different types of Chapter VII missions in different regions. If Chapter VII missions in other regions have successfully helped to establish peace, that has to be the case in Sierra Leone as well.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's commitment to the peace, security and prosperity of the continent of Africa.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Prince Zeid Bin Ra'ad (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and on the wisdom and skill you have demonstrated in conducting the affairs of the Council.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al-Hussein, is committed to the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1270 (1999) and 1289 (2000). While the situation in Sierra Leone remains critical, we believe that the position of the United Nations will improve in the near future. We are now in the process of reinforcing the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by committing two extra companies drawn from Jordan's special forces, and we will be sending another battalion within a few days.

We do not feel it is wise for the Council to consider new initiatives while we are deploying our troops. A reconsideration of the UNAMSIL mandate now may well lead to an absence of agreement between the troop contributors. In our opinion, this would weaken the United Nations position in Sierra Leone. We believe the present mandate should for the time being remain the way it is, under Chapter VII of the Charter, until the situation in Sierra Leone stabilizes. Here we support what was said by the representative of India.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), under Mr. Sankoh, must heed the condemnation of the Security Council and the international community; Mr. Sankoh's troops must not take further hostile action; rather, they must abide by the terms of the Lomé Agreement and Security Council resolutions, and they must give up their weapons immediately so the people of Sierra Leone can have the peace they so richly deserve.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere condolences to the families of those United Nations personnel who lost their lives while fulfilling their duties.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more speakers on my list.

I think that today's open meeting has been very helpful. We have heard a wide range of views of United Nations Members, in particular of the African Members, on the situation in Sierra Leone. Undoubtedly, many ideas and suggestions expressed during the meeting will contribute to the Security Council's consideration of the situation in Sierra Leone.

The Security Council will remain closely seized of the matter and will further discuss the subject as required.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4139/Corr.1

Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4139th meeting

Thursday, 11 May 2000, 8 p.m.
New York

Corrigendum

Page 28, second column, first paragraph, eighth line

For Chapter VII of the Charter *read* Chapter VI of the Charter

00-43615 (E)

United Nations S/PV.4139/Corr.2

Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4139th meeting

Thursday, 11 May 2000, 8 p.m.
New York

Corrigendum

Page 2, first column, eighth line from bottom

and

Page 28, fifth paragraph, first line

For Prince Zeid Bin Ra'ad *read* Prince Zeid bin Ra'ad Al-Hussein

00-45601 (E)

United Nations S/PV.4140

Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

Provisional

4140th Meeting

Friday, 12 May 2000, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Yingfan	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Ms. Moglia
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Kamal
	Mali	Mr. Ag Oumar
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. Scheffers
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Krokhmal
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Minton

Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/387)

00-42824 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/387)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Portugal, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Satoh (Japan), Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Monteiro (Portugal) and Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of any objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ivo Petrov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Mission in Tajikistan.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Petrov to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/2000/387.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Mission in Tajikistan, Mr. Ivo Petrov, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Petrov: Today the Security Council is discussing for the last time the activities of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and the implementation of the General Agreement for peace and national reconciliation in Tajikistan. The main provisions of the peace Agreement have been implemented, and the transition period came to an end with the holding of the first multi-party parliamentary elections and the first session of the new Parliament.

The positive outcome of the peace process in Tajikistan is attributable to three main factors: first, United Nations involvement from the very beginning of the hostilities in the country; secondly, the strong support of eight neighbouring States — especially the Russian Federation and Islamic Republic of Iran — that later became guarantors of the General Agreement and members of the Contact Group; and thirdly, but not least the political will of the two Tajik parties and their leadership to resolve differences through dialogue.

I want to begin with the first main factor, United Nations involvement. The United Nations was instrumental in assisting the negotiation process, which was conducted under its aegis. UNMOT was given a clear mandate by the Security Council, based on the General Agreement. The Security Council supported the Mission and responded positively to its needs whenever that was necessary.

The process of implementation of the provisions of the General Agreement was not free of serious crises. These were expected, as the level of suspicion and lack of confidence between former military opponents prevailed for a long time. Many times the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation was put on hold. However, all of these crises were resolved through the good offices of UNMOT, together with the Contact Group. Special mechanisms, such as ad hoc working groups chaired by the Mission and comprising representatives of both sides, were developed, and they performed efficiently.

The second factor is the contribution of the Contact Group States. The Contact Group of Guarantor States and international organizations conducted more than 130 meetings and played a most vital role as a crisis management mechanism. Throughout the transition period, the Contact Group maintained close working relations with all actors involved in the implementation of the provisions of the General Agreement, including the Government, the Commission on National Reconciliation and a number of international organizations. I would like to underline the fact that during the whole period of the functioning of the Contact Group, the interest of the peace process has always been the priority for the guarantor States.

The third factor is the contribution of the Tajik sides. The Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition made the most decisive contribution to the success of the peace process. President Rakhmonov and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Mr. Nuri, played a historic role in this regard. Both sides' goodwill and commitment to the achievement of peace and national accord in Tajikistan are an important guarantee for a viable peace in the country in the future. The 32 months taken to implement the General Agreement, as compared to the 12 to 18 months stipulated in the Agreement, ought not to detract from this achievement, given the adverse psychological effects of five years of civil war. Working together in the Commission on National Reconciliation created a new attitude for both sides towards the most vital problems of the country.

Despite the successful completion of the transitional period, the country is still facing a lot of problems. There are too many people in arms. The country is regarded by organized crime as a preferred transit route for drug trafficking to Europe. The situation in Afghanistan is a constant source of instability in the whole region. In view of these challenges, Tajikistan requires continued support from the international community for stabilization and post-conflict peace-building.

The key to maintaining peace and political stability in Tajikistan is sustained economic growth. Tajikistan remains the poorest Commonwealth of Independent States country, with an average monthly wage of less than $10. According to a recent World Bank/United Nations Development Programme Living Standards Survey, 80 per cent of the population suffers from extreme poverty. Recent poor harvests, the collapse of the social safety, public health, sanitation and educational systems has meant continued dependence on international assistance.

The country has received humanitarian assistance, and the figures for donor response to the appeal for 2000 are also encouraging: 28 per cent of the total requested, $34.8 million, has been pledged or committed. However, it must be stressed that the country needs not only humanitarian assistance; the problem of economic and social recovery and structural changes, including market reforms, requires significant international development assistance. This has been highly inadequate so far. Without international economic assistance, the viability of the political achievements might be endangered.

In the case of Tajikistan one can say that, in proportion to their accomplishments, the Tajik sides and the Tajik people have received less support than other States and peoples in a similar situation. This could be rectified through assistance for the new period of post-conflict stabilization in that country.

The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) could be regarded as a success story of United Nations peacekeeping. This was possible because of the factors I mentioned at the outset, but also because of the dedicated work of the people who have participated in the mission over the past five and a half years. I wish to stress here the highly professional work of my predecessors, the Special Envoys and Representatives for Tajikistan, Ismat Kittani, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, Gerd Merrem and Jan Kubis, as well as heads of mission Liviu Bota and Darco Silovic. Commendation for work well done should be addressed to all members of the staff of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, both civilian and military, both international and local.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Ivo Petrov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Tajikistan and head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), for participating in today's meeting and, most important, for the work he and his colleagues are carrying out in Tajikistan.

Today's meeting of the Security Council and the statement which you, Mr. President, will be making at its conclusion are unusual events. They will aim at summing up the many United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Tajikistan, including the work of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, and at reaffirming the international community's unswerving support for the Tajik people on its difficult path to peace and national reconciliation.

Russia welcomes the success that has been achieved in the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Tajikistan. The implementation of the major provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, signed on 27 June 1997 at Moscow under United Nations auspices, is an important achievement not only by the Tajik people but also by the United Nations. The success of the peace process was advanced by the activities of UNMOT, the Contact Group of guarantor States and international organizations, and donor States, which have played an extremely positive role at various stages of the inter-Tajik settlement process.

As Mr. Petrov has said, the basis of success has of course been the goodwill of the former parties to the conflict, their political courage, their realism and their ability to subordinate their own ambitions to the interests of the people. I wish, through the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Rashid Alimov, who is participating in today's meeting, to congratulate all Tajiks on this important gain, which will have defined the peaceful, democratic development of Tajik society.

Russia has played an active role at all stages of the inter-Tajik settlement process and, along with Iran and its Central Asian partners, has become one of the key guarantors of the implementation of the General Agreement. Russian peacekeepers within the collective peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in close cooperation with UNMOT, have made a substantive contribution to stabilizing the situation, to promoting and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations and other international personnel in Tajikistan, to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to the implementation of the General Agreement.

Over the past several years, together with their Tajik colleagues, Russian border troops have carried out an important task, helping to stabilize the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border by raising a barrier to the illegal traffic in narcotic drugs and in weapons, and by putting an end to the activities of terrorists, extremists and other subversive elements from the territory of neighbouring Afghanistan.

We know that a great deal remains to be done to consolidate peace and stability in Tajikistan. We note with satisfaction that the report of the Secretary-General states that actions laid down in the General Agreement but not yet carried out in full will in fact be completed by the relevant Government organs. In that connection, we support such measures taken by the leadership of Tajikistan as the integration of former participants in the hostilities into the country's military structures and the removal from the population of weapons, ammunition and other illegal possessions.

Russia also supports recent measures by leaders of the Republic of Tajikistan to improve the situation in the country and in the Central Asian region as a whole. Together with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and our other CIS partners, we are ready to strengthen efforts to counter international terrorism and extremism.

We fully share the Secretary-General's conclusion that the international community should continue to provide support to Tajikistan, which has now embarked upon the enterprise of post-conflict peace-building. Here, we support the Secretary-General's intention to inform the Security Council of the objectives of a United Nations office for Tajikistan, to be established following the withdrawal of UNMOT upon the expiry of its mandate, on 15 May 2000. There should be no break in the United Nations presence in Tajikistan. In addition to the general aim of promoting the post-conflict social and economic rehabilitation of Tajikistan, the mandate of the new United Nations office should include such important elements as technical and financial assistance for the process of reintegrating former participants in the hostilities, completion of their demobilization, creation of civilian employment for former military personnel, disarmament of the population and the return of remaining refugees.

Today, as the Republic of Tajikistan embarks on a path leading to the ultimate establishment of civil accord and peace, Russia is ready to offer all possible assistance for post-conflict peace-building in Tajikistan.

Ms. Moglia (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine delegation wishes to welcome the way in which the situation in Tajikistan is being addressed. We thank Mr. Petrov for his briefing and we thank the Secretary-General for his report, document S/2000/387.

We want to say how pleased we are at the way in which the political process in Tajikistan has evolved since January 1993, when the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was established as a small political office in Dushanbe in the midst of the civil war that broke out immediately following Tajikistan's achievement of independence. The efforts of successive Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the

Secretary-General to promote inter-Tajik talks were productive and ultimately led to a ceasefire.

Subsequently, through the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan of June 1997, the Government and the opposition, as well as Tajik society as a whole, made clear their wish for peace and democracy.

The Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission also took part in this productive process. We should like to express our sincere gratitude to all of them.

We regret, however, that in consolidating this process there have been times of great difficulty for the security of UNMOT personnel. We have had to mourn the loss of six of its members. We should like to pay a special tribute to them. We should like to tell their families that their sacrifice was not in vain.

Furthermore, we are aware that the recent parliamentary elections were far from being perfect, that there are still many armed elements whose actions are beyond the control of the Government, that there are acute economic and social problems and that the instability in the region is contributing to the situation of insecurity.

Accordingly, we agree with the Secretary-General's comments, contained in his report, that the continued support of the international community in the post-conflict phase will be important for Tajikistan's ability to sustain and build on the achievements of the peace process. In this context, we await with great interest the proposal that will be sent to the Security Council relating to the possible establishment of a post-conflict peace-building office that will have the important and lofty objective of addressing the institutional, social and economic development of the country, within a framework of peace, democracy and respect for human rights. We believe that the presence in Tajikistan of the United Nations, whose work was essential and invaluable, will thus be guaranteed during this new stage of democratic consolidation.

In this spirit, we support the draft presidential statement that endorses the Secretary-General's plan to withdraw UNMOT when its mandate expires on 15 May and that encourages Member States and other interested parties to make voluntary contributions to projects for the social and economic recovery of the country.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): My delegation would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ivo Petrov, for his briefing and introduction of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2000/387.

I would like to make some brief comments on several areas. The first relates to elections. As my delegation commented on 21 March, the holding of parliamentary elections in Tajikistan on 27 February was a significant step forward in the democratic process. We are pleased to note that it was the first multi-party, pluralistic election in the history of Tajikistan. It included participation by former warring parties, and the fact that elections were held without violent incidents designed to halt the process was in itself a success.

Secondly, with regard to the integration of opposition fighters, we believe that in order to consolidate the peace process, the reintegration of ex-combatants into society should be given high priority. It cannot be viewed merely as a sequential event which will follow their disarmament. The two processes are intertwined. Positive results gained from the reintegration of the former combatants into society will mobilize those still holding on to arms and encourage them to surrender their weapons.

My third comment relates to the role of the Tajik Government, which should focus on consolidating the achievements already made. Elections are only a starting point in a long journey in the quest for national reconciliation and democratic institution-building. The Tajik Government, with the full support of the international community, should concentrate on carrying this process forward.

Fourthly, with regard to future United Nations engagement and the role of the international community, we have noted from the Secretary-General's report that he will be consulting the Tajik Government about the possible role of the United Nations in post-conflict peace-building and will inform the Council about the outcome of his consultations. It would be worthwhile for the Council to consider some viable and convincing options for the future involvement of the United Nations in Tajikistan.

Finally, with regard to the way ahead, the international community has a responsibility to see that the gains achieved in Tajikistan are not lost due to waning interest after the immediate crisis is over. It

should come forward with assistance to help the fledgling democracy take root and to create opportunities for the people to see hope in their future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Security Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Turkmenistan in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Mohammad Kamal (Malaysia): Let me, at the outset, extend my delegation's warm welcome to Mr. Ivo Petrov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan, and thank him for his very useful briefing. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his final report (S/2000/387) on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT).

My delegation welcomes the significant achievements in the peace and reconciliation process in Tajikistan, as described by the Secretary-General in his report. We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Tajik leadership and people for their political will and the strong commitment that they have demonstrated to end the war in their country and pursue the path of peace and national accord. We strongly urge them to strive further, with determined effort, to strengthen and consolidate the achievements made thus far so that the peace process will be irreversible.

The United Nations, with the important support of the Contact Group and international organizations, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States Collective Peacekeeping Forces, has played a crucial role in the Tajik peace process. Some seven years of active involvement of the United Nations in Tajikistan has been recognized as a success, culminating in the successful conclusion of UNMOT's mandate. This is indeed a matter of great satisfaction to my delegation. At the same time, we note that this success has not been without price. We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Petrov and his predecessors, and to all the men and women of UNMOT, especially the Mission personnel who gave their lives in the service of peace in Tajikistan.

There is still a long way to go before peace can really endure in Tajikistan. The challenge of disarming armed elements that operate outside the Government's control, as well as the daunting economic and social problems, have yet to be fully and effectively overcome. We fully share the Secretary-General's assessment that continued international support for Tajikistan will remain necessary beyond the current transitional period. In this regard, we strongly support the Secretary-General's intention to establish a United Nations post-conflict peace-building office in Tajikistan, following the withdrawal of UNMOT, with the objective of consolidating peace and promoting democracy. We therefore look forward to the details on the establishment of that office.

Finally, we would like to express our support for the draft presidential statement that this Council will adopt following this meeting. We thank the Russian delegation for its initiative.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): The Council has an exceptionally busy agenda today and, in recognition of that fact, I will shorten my statement, though the Secretariat will distribute the full version. I should also like to associate my delegation with the statement that the Permanent Representative of Portugal will make later this afternoon on behalf of the European Union.

We are grateful to Special Representative Petrov for his briefing this afternoon. The road to peace in Tajikistan has not been easy. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was forced to act in volatile and dangerous circumstances, sadly losing six of its staff, and the political process continues to be difficult, with international observers declaring the recent parliamentary elections to be deeply flawed.

We must take this opportunity to congratulate UNMOT's leadership and staff for their excellent work. We should particularly remember those peacekeepers who gave their lives to the cause of peace in Tajikistan. We trust that the Government of Tajikistan will take steps to ensure the safety of those personnel who are to remain in the country.

We should not underestimate the task that faces the people and leaders of Tajikistan if they are to grasp this opportunity for lasting peace. The United Kingdom is pleased that the Secretary-General intends to establish a post-conflict peace-building office in Dushanbe. We hope that the office will incorporate a significant human rights capability. Respect for the human rights of the Tajik people, the building of strong democratic institutions and the enforcement of the rule of law are not optional extras. They are key elements to the future peace and stability of Tajikistan and their promotion should be at the core of the new office's role.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I want to thank the Secretary-General for his report and Mr. Ivo Petrov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the additional information.

My delegation welcomes the success achieved in the peace process in Tajikistan. We also commend the role played by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and other parties. There is no doubt that their perseverance, often through difficult times, hugely contributed to the current positive state of affairs.

While acknowledging the overall success of the peace process, my delegation notes the difficulties that remain, in particular the existence of armed elements outside the control of the Government, which contributes to insecurity, as well as the daunting economic and social challenges. We hope that, in time, these problems can also be solved effectively.

My delegation is grateful for the excellent summary by the Secretary-General of the activities of UNMOT since its establishment. When reading through the report, I could not help drawing a parallel between difficulties experienced by that Mission, which achieved success, and missions currently under way, in particular in Africa. There is a clear message that, with perseverance by all parties, a mission can be successful, despite the existence of numerous and protracted difficulties.

Even more striking for my delegation are the characteristics cited that contributed to the overall positive outcome of the Mission. These include the early engagement of the United Nations in the conflict; the sustained political support of the Security Council and interested member States in the region; cooperation with other organizations; effective crisis management; and the clear will of the people of the country to end the war and pursue a political solution.

It seems that if these requirements could be met by the United Nations and the international community as a whole, other peace efforts could also succeed. What is required is the political will of all the parties concerned.

Finally, I would like to join the Secretary-General in paying tribute to the men and women who served in UNMOT and we look forward to his opinion about the possible establishment of a post-conflict peace-building office in Tajikistan. Furthermore, we support the draft presidential statement that was submitted by the Russian delegation.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The exhaustive report which has just been presented to us by Mr. Petrov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General — whom we wish to thank, along with all the members of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), for their efforts — marks the last of a series devoted to the situation in Tajikistan and the activities of UNMOT.

I take this opportunity to associate myself with preceding delegations in welcoming the successful culmination of the peace process in Tajikistan. The success of this process was the result of the will demonstrated by the Tajik parties. We hail their resolve to overcome the obstacles they encountered throughout this period. Despite the repeated crises that threatened the process, this determination allowed the conclusion of a series of agreements, crowned by the signing of the General Agreement of 1997.

While noting with satisfaction the highly important role of the United Nations in the comprehensive implementation of the main provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, I should like to pay due tribute to the various protagonists who participated, either on site or at a distance, in the peace process in Tajikistan and its consolidation. In particular, we wish to thank the officials and staff of UNMOT, military and civilian alike, who often worked in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions with the assistance of others, such as the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission and the Commonwealth of Independent States collective peacekeeping forces. In that context, we pay homage to the memory of those who fell in the service of peace in Tajikistan.

With the withdrawal of UNMOT and the expiration of its mandate on 15 May 2000, the support of the international community will be extremely important and remain indispensable if Tajikistan is to continue on the path of peace and national reconciliation. We attach particular importance to this post-conflict phase, for the situation in Tajikistan remains fragile because of domestic and external factors alike, which can be a source of instability and the resurgence of violence. We urge all the parties to persevere to ensure that the gains made since 1993 are consolidated within the framework of the new United Nations office, which will work for the consolidation of peace and the social and economic restoration of Tajikistan.

Mr. Minton (United States): The United States concurs with the Secretary-General's assessment that the process which the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was created to support is now over. With the recent violence-free parliamentary elections, the transition set forth in the peace accords has been completed.

We agree that UNMOT should be formally terminated upon expiration of its current mandate on 15 May 2000. For this achievement, we wish to congratulate Special Representative Petrov and the staff of UNMOT. We are aware of the sacrifices made by UNMOT personnel, recognizing in particular that some gave their lives for this cause, and we feel the deepest gratitude for their contributions.

My delegation now hopes that the Government of Tajikistan will build on the successful work of UNMOT by taking further steps to consolidate the gains of the peace process. It is particularly important that the emerging democratic institutions of Tajikistan be nurtured and solidified, so that all groups within the country have a voice and a stake in the political process.

Although the recent elections constituted a significant step towards democracy, they were marked by serious flaws and cannot fully be characterized as free, fair and transparent. The process of reconciliation among various political and social groups in Tajikistan is still far from complete. The United States therefore believes that the closure of the peacekeeping mission should by no means signify an end to the international community's engagement with Tajikistan and that support for the peace process there must continue.

We concur that there is a need for the establishment of a small follow-on United Nations mission to support peace-building and further national reconciliation. We welcome further discussion of the follow-on mission, and we are open to ideas and suggestions as to how it can best be organized, staffed and administered. We anticipate that this mission will build effectively on the accomplishments of UNMOT.

The United States looks forward to working with the international community and with the Government and people of Tajikistan in bringing about full national reconciliation and stability in that country.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrov, for his briefing, as well as his excellent work in the field.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), which is a proud achievement, and particularly gratifying at this time in light of the current difficulties we face in Sierra Leone. While the two missions are, of course, very different, both in scope and complexity, UNMOT's contribution to the peace process in Tajikistan does demonstrate that the United Nations has an important role to play in helping Member States overcome security crises that imperil security, so that they may embark on the path to peace, national reconciliation and democracy.

Canada salutes the valiant efforts of the men and women of UNMOT for their important work under very difficult and often dangerous conditions. We pay tribute to those members who gave their lives in the service of peace in Tajikistan. We wish to express our sympathy to the bereaved families. As the Secretary-General noted in his report earlier this month, their sacrifice must not be forgotten. A fitting memorial will be the continuation of the United Nations involvement in Tajikistan to support national efforts to build a peaceful and stable country, rooted in respect for human rights, the rule of law, democracy and good governance.

Canada looks forward to the Secretary-General's proposal for the post-conflict peace-building office, which should include a component focusing on the promotion and protection of human rights. The international community must remain actively involved in helping address the range of political, economic, social and human rights issues affecting the country.

Canada supports the presidential statement.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Tajikistan, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ivo Petrov, for his briefing.

Jamaica applauds the resolution of the conflict and the establishment of peace in Tajikistan. This is an important step towards achieving stability in Central Asia. We commend the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for the implementation of its mandate, in accordance with the 1997 Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

The Mission has reached a successful conclusion. We wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives, and of those countries and international organizations which supported the peace efforts of the United Nations. We also wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to those who gave their lives in the cause of peace.

The commitment of the Tajik people and Government to the creation of a pluralistic democracy is clear. The country is now well on the road to peace and national reconciliation, and the international community must support the efforts of the Government aimed at economic, political and military reforms. Existing political institutions must be strengthened in order to ensure the creation of a sustainable system of governance in collaboration with the Tajik people.

We believe that the United Nations must remain involved in order to cement the gains made in the peace process, to foster greater democracy in the region and to ensure that continuing instability does not jeopardize the peace achieved.

My delegation therefore welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a post-conflict peace-building mission following the withdrawal of UNMOT. While United Nations programmes and agencies in Tajikistan will have new priorities, they will have a crucial role to play in the years ahead. The long-term economic and social development of Tajikistan must be addressed by strengthening local institutions and through capacity-building. Humanitarian activities must continue to be given prominence. Increased emphasis must now be placed on ensuring the return of refugees from neighbouring countries and internally displaced persons to their places of origin, as well as on the reintegration of ex-combatants. But if United Nations personnel are to operate effectively, their security must be assured and not threatened by armed elements operating outside of the control of the Government.

In conclusion, I wish to express my delegation's support for the presidential statement initiated by the Russian Federation.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): My delegation is grateful to Mr. Petrov, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his informative briefing on the latest developments in Tajikistan and the activities of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT).

In March the Security Council agenda focused on the parliamentary elections in Tajikistan that had been held in February. On a very positive note, Council members maintained that the elections were held on a multi-party and pluralistic basis. During the elections, the people of Tajikistan rose to the challenge of peace and democracy by accepting the democratic standards of governance. We are all aware that the elections brought new capacities and new perspectives to the movement towards long-term stability in that country.

We believe that the Government and people of Tajikistan, in line with this democratic choice, will continue to seek a way forward that provides for development of democratic institutions. Even more importantly, it must be accompanied by progress on economic and social reforms in the country.

The progress that the parties to the peace process in Tajikistan have made is most evident in the post-conflict peace-building. We are pleased to note that the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) in Tajikistan is broadly recognized as a success. In three days the Mission will cease to exist. The more than seven years of its dedicated operation in the country have testified to the sincere desire of the international community to bring peace and reconciliation to this country.

The road to peace and reconciliation in Tajikistan has not been a smooth one. It was marked by periods of uncertainty and grave crises. However, the Government and political parties of Tajikistan demonstrated their commitment to the peace agreement, solved their differences through dialogue, overcame many obstacles and eventually embarked on the path towards the peace and democracy.

As the Secretary-General rightly stresses in the report, the support of the Security Council was decisive in helping UNMOT through difficult times. My delegation pays tribute to the Contract Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations for the effort it made to maintain a political dialogue between the Tajik parties. We would also like to commend the UNMOT staff members for their dedicated work during these years. This work ensured the successful implementation of the task entrusted to them by the international community. We are proud of the fact that Ukrainian nationals made a real contribution to the successful work of the Mission. We pay special tribute to those Mission members who gave their lives in the service of peace in Tajikistan.

The tasks that face Tajik society today are no less important then those of the previous period. A major challenge now is to consolidate peace and promote democracy. International support during this very challenging period will be of particular value to that country. We are convinced that the Organization should provide assistance to the consolidation of democracy in Tajikistan. We anticipate that the implementation of the provisions set forth in General Assembly resolution 54/96 A, "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan", will receive new impetus in the new, secure environment in Tajikistan.

In this context we welcome the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General in drawing the attention of the international community to the current humanitarian issues in Tajikistan and in mobilizing international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country's economy.

We support the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations post-conflict peace-building office in Tajikistan. We believe that cooperation between the future office and other international agencies in Tajikistan and with the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will be of great importance for the democratic development of Tajik society.

I also would like to support the draft presidential statement proposed be the Russian Federation.

Mr. Ag Oumar (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Ivo Petrov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), for presenting the report of the Secretary-General. My delegation deeply appreciates the way in which he guided the mandate of UNMOT.

The Security Council will recall that, last 21 March, when it considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan contained in document S/2000/214, it believed that the holding of the first pluralist parliamentary elections would mark a major step forward in the process of democratization and national reconciliation. The expiration of the mandate of UNMOT had then been announced for 15 May — that is, three days from now.

The report of the Secretary-General in document S/2000/387 — which is the last of the series and which has been submitted for our consideration — reports on the completion of the electoral process which paved the way for peace in Tajikistan. Thus the two chambers of the newly elected parliament held their first joint session on 27 April. The election of candidates to the 33 seats of the National Assembly, the upper house, was held as scheduled on 23 March, and, in accordance with the Constitution, 25 deputies were elected by local assemblies and 8 were appointed by the President. The Commission on National Reconciliation was formally dissolved by presidential decree as from 1 April.

To reach this stage, the United Nations has travelled a long road, but, as it is said, "all's well that ends well". However, the international community should not rest on its laurels; the way ahead is still long and full of obstacles. The reintegration of the opposition into the political life of the country is a major achievement; however, parliamentary elections, in the view of international observers, were marred by serious irregularities, and armed elements are continuing to operate beyond the control of the Government, thus contributing to a climate of insecurity. The country has been experiencing enormous economic and social problems. A resurgence of instability cannot be ruled out on account of both domestic factors and the unstable situation throughout the region.

Tajikistan is entering a new phase of its history and needs the support of the international community more than ever to pursue and complete the peace process and to secure the outcome.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a United Nations office which would be entrusted with peace-building and would facilitate an ongoing search for solutions to the problems of

institutional, social and economic development in a consistent fashion, in order to strengthen peace and promote democracy in Tajikistan.

My delegation would like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan, who is here today, and we would like to express our satisfaction with the unstinting cooperation that the Tajik people and Government provided. It allowed UNMOT to achieve its mandate. I also note the Contact Group's support of these efforts.

My delegation also thanks the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, the military observers and the men and women who participated in this Mission often under difficult conditions.

Finally, my delegation would like to pay tribute to those who fell in the service of peace for mankind, and we present our condolences to their families. My delegation will support the Russian Federation's proposed statement, which will authorize the expiration of UNMOT's mandate. We thank that delegation for this work.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

The Chinese delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Tajikistan. Our thanks also go to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrov, for his briefing.

At the outset I would like to express my congratulations for the success achieved in the peace process in Tajikistan and by the United Nations peacekeeping operation in that country. This success shows that the practical implementation of the peace agreement and the success of the United Nations peacekeeping operation have depended on the political will of the Tajik Government and other parties concerned. They have also depended on the strong support of the international community. We express our profound appreciation to the United Nations, the Contact Group, the Russian Federation and other parties concerned for their efforts.

As the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) comes to an end, we would like to pay special tribute to the successive Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for their contributions.

We salute UNMOT for the important role it has played in promoting national reconciliation in Tajikistan, especially those who gave their lives for the cause of peace in Tajikistan.

We support the intention of the Secretary-General to hold consultations with the Tajik Government with a view to agreeing as soon as possible on the establishment of the United Nations post-conflict peace-building office in Tajikistan.

As a friendly neighbour of Tajikistan, China will continue to contribute to the economic rehabilitation and social development of Tajikistan.

In closing, the Chinese delegation supports the draft presidential statement to be adopted by the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to say that my delegation is extraordinarily gratified to see you, an outstanding representative of the People's Republic of China — a great State that is a neighbour and friend of Tajikistan — presiding over this meeting of the Security Council, which is an important and truly historic meeting for my country. Your diplomatic experience and talent provide all grounds for confidence in the successful work of the Council under your leadership this month.

Allow me to express our satisfaction at the highly substantive discussion that has just taken place on the final report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan and at the valuable comments made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan, Mr. Ivo Petrov. They provide much food for thought and serve as guidelines for further action.

We are deeply grateful to all members of the Council for the wishes they have addressed to the people and Government of Tajikistan in their sincere desire to see us achieve a lasting peace and flourish in stable democratic development in the post-conflict peace-building period.

My delegation would like to thank all members of the Security Council for their genuine and warm interest, as expressed in their statements, in a further

strengthening of the success achieved during the peace process. We are particularly inspired by the fact that the members of the Council have once again shown their solidarity with Tajikistan and its efforts to move towards building a democratic and secular State of law.

It is appropriate today to recall the situation that existed when, more than seven years ago — on 21 January 1993 — the United Nations, on the request of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, began its peacekeeping activity in our country by opening its small political mission in Dushanbe. During that period, the merciless flames of internal conflict were raging throughout the country. In conditions of what was essentially a civil war, the moral and psychological atmosphere of society was poisoned by the venom of enmity and mutual distrust. The situation on the Tajik-Afghan border was critical. There were almost daily violations, accompanied by casualties. All of this continued to grow.

Forces linked to international terrorism, religious extremism, illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs and weapons and other criminal activities attempted to exploit this set of circumstances. A real danger emerged that threatened Tajikistan's very existence as an independent and sovereign State and its territorial integrity. We faced a clear and ever-increasing threat to regional stability and security. It was no easy task to find the only reasonable formula, the only correct path to peace.

Against that backdrop, on 5 April 1994 at Moscow, under the aegis of the United Nations, a difficult inter-Tajik dialogue began. That dialogue continued for 1,171 days. In the course of over three years, the incredibly complex negotiating process first led to the conclusion, on 17 September 1994 at Tehran, of the Agreement on a Temporary Ceasefire and the Cessation of Other Hostile Acts on the Tajik-Afghan Border and within the Country for the Duration of the Talks. Ultimately, that led to the signing at Moscow, on 27 June 1997, of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

The length of that period meant that the path we followed was genuinely one that lasted an entire epoch. As a direct party to that process, I can attest to the fact that those were years of intensive, constructive and collective work dedicated to the achievement of a most noble objective: the restoration — with the assistance of the international community — of peace and tranquillity to the land of Tajikistan.

The venues for the holding of negotiations changed: Moscow, Tehran, Islamabad, Ashgabat, Almaty and Bishkek. The members of the delegations of the Tajik sides changed, as did the intermediaries who were acting on behalf of the Secretary-General. However, what remained unchanged was the goal: overcoming all obstacles to find the road that led to peace, stability and democracy in Tajikistan. The path from armed confrontation to national reconciliation was long and onerous, but it turned out to be the only correct path that was in fact consonant with the fundamental interests of Tajik society.

The long-awaited hope for the restoration of peace to the land of Tajikistan returned with the conclusion of the Moscow General Agreement, and once again the highest national priorities were proclaimed to be cooperation and the unity of all citizens regardless of their nationality, religious faith or political allegiance. The gloomiest chapter in the tragic modern history of our country was closed, and the Republic entered a new era.

Enormous credit for this goes to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leaders of the former United Tajik Opposition, which demonstrated the capacity to raise their sights, transcend the interests of the moment and direct their political will at resolving issues that directly affected the fate of the Tajik people.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, headed the peace process with personal courage, goodwill, political insight and organizational ability. To this day, he remains the major driving force of the process, while relying on the support of the absolute majority of the population of the country.

The long journey to national reconciliation begun seven years ago under the aegis of the United Nations has today reached its logical conclusion. All of the key provisions of the General Agreement have been implemented. The major functions of the Commission on National Reconciliation, which was established in accordance with the Agreement, have been carried out.

The United Tajik Opposition has announced the disbanding of its armed units, which has become one of the most important stages in the implementation of the Protocol on Military Issues. Some 7,000 former fighters of the opposition have had the appropriate registration carried out. More than 6,000 have been integrated into the military forces of the Republic, and the others have been demobilized and have returned to civilian life.

For the most part, the process provided for by the general amnesty has been completed. Agreed amendments have been made to our fundamental law, the Constitution of the Republic, through the national referendum. A Government for the country has now been formed on a broad national political basis with the participation of representatives of the former armed opposition. Through a direct secret ballot, on an alternative basis, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan has been elected.

Taking into account the amendments made to the Constitution of the country, for the first time in the modern history of Tajikistan there have been multi-party, pluralist elections for the Republic's organs of legislative power. As a result of this, a bi-cameral parliament has been formed and has begun its work. One of the major achievements of the inter-Tajik settlement was that virtually all of the approximately 52,000 refugees in Afghanistan returned to their homes, and more than 180,000 returned from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as more than 680,000 internally displaced persons.

It is well known that during the many years of armed confrontation more than 50,000 perished, and the total value of material losses, in an already poor country, amounted to more than $7 billion. This was compounded by the requirements for the settling, psychological adaption and full-fledged integration into the social, economic and political life of the country of these refugees and displaced persons, who accounted for nearly one fifth of the population of the country. These circumstances further aggravated an already critical economic and social situation in Tajikistan. The restoration of destroyed social and cultural sites, the revival and reform of the economy of the country, the strengthening of State institutions, the establishment of social conditions conducive to a dignified life for each member of society — all of that, along with the objectives of achieving a political settlement, was the daily concern of the Government of the country.

It is understandable that Tajikistan, acting alone, could not cope with these and other enormous problems. Comprehensive international assistance and support played a critically important role in overcoming the crisis phase of the development of Tajik society. The United Nations can rightfully and proudly chalk up as a peacekeeping success its assistance to Tajikistan in achieving a political settlement to the armed conflict and in resolving the humanitarian and socio-economic problems of the country.

With the support and assistance of the international community in Tajikistan, the bases began to be laid down for building a modern, democratic State of law with a socially focused market economy. A philosophy of peace and constructive thinking won out over a philosophy of enmity and destruction.

Today in Tajikistan the reign of peace is becoming ever stronger. The Government and the people of my country are deeply and fully aware of the plethora of extraordinarily complex difficulties facing them, and in resolving them we are counting on the continuing noble support of the international community. The success, achieved through the assistance of the United Nations of achieving a peaceful life has enhanced confidence on the part of ordinary people of Tajikistan in the United Nations and raised it to new heights. To maintain that confidence without dashing the hopes of these people is something the Organization can do only by reasserting its authority through specific actions designed to strengthen peace and stability in our country.

We have responded with gratitude to the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations office to assist in post-conflict peace-building in Tajikistan. I am confident that the new United Nations office will also meet with a positive response from the Government and the people of Tajikistan, who are looking to it for energetic coordination of international efforts to bring about the social and economic rehabilitation of the country. We are convinced that the provision of carefully targeted assistance to Tajikistan by the international community will play an important role in assisting the strengthening of peace and stability throughout the entire region of Central Asia.

Today's meeting provides us with an outstanding opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to all of those who have made contributions to the cause of peace in Tajikistan. These are first and foremost the more than 40 States that have been members of the Security Council during the years of the Council's consideration of the issue of Tajikistan. Thanks to the unfailing and constant attention of members of the Council, it has been possible to design the major parameters and coordinated actions of the international community for successfully moving the peace process in our country forward. Superb professional and human qualities were demonstrated in this respect both by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and by his colleague who is now the highest official of the Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan.

I should also like to mention all of the Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General and leaders of the United Nations groups and missions who dedicated their talents and in fact gave themselves body and soul to the cause of peace in Tajikistan: Liviu Bota, Ismat Kittani, Ramiro Píriz-Ballón, Darko Silovic, Gerd Dietrick Merrem, Ján Kubiš and Ivo Petrov, who is participating in our meeting today.

Separate mention should be made of the staff members of the United Nations Secretariat who dealt daily with and successively resolved the complex problems involved in Tajikistan. We are grateful to all States — and there are some 30 of them — that sent their staff members to the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, staff members who demonstrated outstanding professionalism, courage and self-abnegation in carrying out their duties.

To our great regret, there were also tragic losses. Four citizens of Austria, Poland, Uruguay and Japan gave their lives for the cause of peace in Tajikistan. Their names will for ever remain in our hearts and in the memory of the Tajik people.

Impressive work was also carried out in Tajikistan by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, and the agency she heads. To a great extent they were responsible for the restoration of some 29,500 of nearly 38,000 homes destroyed during the course of the hostilities, for the finding of jobs for 133,000 of 140,000 families that suffered from the war and for the return of virtually all of the illegally occupied houses to their former owners.

A great contribution was made to alleviate the drastic problems facing Tajikistan, and active work is continuing in our country on the part of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the International Financial Corporation.

The efforts of the United Nations to restore peace and stability in Tajikistan were actively promoted by other international organizations as well, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and also other friendly guarantor States for the implementation of the General Agreement — Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. All of these States and organizations, which were part of the Contact Group, served as reliable guarantors of the implementation of the General Agreement. The experience of the work of this group will no doubt be applicable and useful in the settlement of other crisis situations.

We wish to single out Russia among those States, and to convey our special gratitude for its decisive contribution to all stages of the inter-Tajik settlement process.

Russian military personnel, moreover, were the backbone of the collective peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which from 1993 to the present have been playing an important stabilizing role in our country. Russian border troops, who at the request of the Government of Tajikistan are serving on the Tajik-Afghan border, are demonstrating sterling qualities, carrying out their duties in a selfless, highly professional way through the difficult years when they protected Tajikistan from infiltration from neighbouring Afghanistan, which was torn apart by conflict, terrorism, criminal elements, drugs and weapons. Our peoples will never forget the Russian peacekeepers and border troops who laid down their lives in the cause of the security and stability of both Russia and Tajikistan.

The people and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan are overjoyed and highly elated that, with the support of the entire international community, it has been possible for us, at the turn of a new millennium, to break the vicious circle of fratricidal enmity and to channel the development of our State and our society into a civilized course of peace, democracy and a flourishing society.

In Tajik society today there is growing confidence that Tajikistan possesses all the components of a modern, democratic, economically viable State. The rich, centuries-old history of the Tajik people, the vast intellectual and spiritual heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors, and our enormous human potential are an earnest of that.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Tajikistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

As the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) comes to an end, the European Union would like to put on record its satisfaction and appreciation at the important role played by the mission, supported by the Contact Group of guarantor States and international organizations, in assisting the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in TaJikistan.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Tajikistan and welcome his positive assessment of the role played by the United Nations. In particular, we take note of his analysis of the factors that contributed to the overall success of the mission, namely the early engagement of the United Nations, the sustained political support of the Security Council, cooperation with other organizations, effective crisis management and, above all, the clear will of the parties to end the conflict and pursue a political solution. These are important lessons for the United Nations, which are applicable beyond Tajikistan.

A key factor in the peace process in Tajikistan has been the reintegration of the opposition into the political life of Tajikistan: a sine qua non for national reconciliation and the strengthening of the democratic process. This is why the European Union was particularly disturbed by the undemocratic events and procedures that took place in connection with the presidential elections in November 1999 and by the seriously flawed recent parliamentary elections. The ultimate success of the peace process will depend on national reconciliation and a functioning democratic society based on the rule of law. The European Union strongly supports the peace process in Tajikistan and links the future development of contractual relations between the European Union and Tajikistan to it.

In the context of the need for the continued support of the international community in the post-conflict phase in Tajikistan to sustain and advance the peace process, the European Union looks forward to the proposals of the Secretary-General with regard to the possible establishment there of a United Nations office charged with addressing institutional, social and economic development in an integrated manner in order to consolidate peace and promote democracy. The European Union stresses, in this regard, the importance of a human rights component.

The European Union would also like to emphasize its appreciation for the contribution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the peace process in Tajikistan. After the withdrawal of UNMOT the OSCE mission will remain on the ground and continue to assist Tajikistan on its path towards democracy.

The European Union joins the Secretary-General and the members of the Security Council in paying tribute to the men and women who served in UNMOT and thanking them very sincerely for their selfless efforts, which in certain cases involved paying the ultimate price: their lives.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for providing us with this opportunity to present our views on the situation in Tajikistan at this special moment when the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) has successfully completed its mandate.

Japan fully agrees with the Secretary-General's assessment that with the completion of UNMOT's mandate, the democratization process in Tajikistan has to move on to a new stage. There is no doubt that continued United Nations involvement is indispensable in the coming years in order to consolidate the achievement made so far. Japan therefore supports the establishment of a post-conflict peace-building office in Tajikistan.

I would like to pay high tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ivo Petrov, as well as to the former Special Representative, Mr. Jan Kubis, for their tireless efforts, which have greatly contributed to the progress to date in the democratization of Tajikistan.

At the same time, let us not forget the invaluable contributions made by all the UNMOT staff members, particularly those who have given their lives for peace and democracy in Tajikistan. In all, eight United Nations staff members lost their lives during UNMOT's

deployment. The victims include Professor Yutaka Akino, a renowned Japanese scholar of Central Asia, who was brutally murdered in July 1998 while serving as a political officer of UNMOT. His devotion to the cause of peace in Tajikistan has become a legend among the people of Japan.

That Tajikistan's first democratic parliamentary elections were held in a relatively peaceful atmosphere with multi-party participation was no doubt an important step towards the realization of democracy. Having extended approximately $150,000 in financial assistance to the electoral observer mission deployed by the United Nations and the UNMOT voter education project, and also having sent a mission to monitor the election held in February, Japan shares a sense of achievement with the Government and the people of Tajikistan and indeed with all those concerned with UNMOT.

But we have to acknowledge the fact that certain shortcomings still remain in the electoral system, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report. These include a lack of transparency in the voter registration process and ambiguities pertaining to the independence of the election administration. We would like to urge the Tajik Government to learn lessons from recent experiences and to improve the electoral system.

It is evident that the Government and the people of Tajikistan will have to solve many problems in order to make further advances in their political, economic and social development. The demobilization, disarmament and reintegration into society of former soldiers is particularly important for the stability of Tajikistan, whose democracy is still fragile.

We believe that, in solving these problems, Tajikistan needs greater attention and support from the international community. For its part, Japan has been extending cooperation to the country's efforts — for example, by hosting a seminar on democracy and good governance in 1999, receiving Tajik trainees and contributing to the United Nations Development Programme rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programme. I want to assure the Council that Japan will continue to help Tajikistan in its nation-building efforts.

Let me conclude by appealing to both the Government of Tajikistan and the international community to renew their determination at this important juncture to work together to further advance democratization, national reconciliation and economic development in Tajikistan.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Austria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour to speak in my capacity as the representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Like previous speakers, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Ivo Petrov, for the excellent report and for the successful work accomplished by the United Nations Mission in Tajikistan.

Since Austria acceded to the chairmanship of the OSCE at the beginning of this year, Central Asia has become a major priority of the organization's work. To this end, the OSCE Secretary General, Ján Kubiš, was appointed Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the region this January. In the meantime, Mr. Kubiš has met with the Presidents and Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. His expertise as former Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan and Head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) is an enormous asset which enabled the OSCE to enter into a substantial, action-oriented dialogue, not only with Dushanbe but also with Astana, Bishkek, Ashgabat and Tashkent.

Let me now say a few words about the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan. It was established at the 1993 Rome Ministerial Council meeting. Today, apart from the main office in Dushanbe, there are field offices in Kurgan-Tyube, Shaartuz, Dusti, Garm and, since February, Khujand. In this context, I would like to pay tribute to the untiring efforts of the current Head of the Mission, Ambassador Buhoara.

The Mission received a broad and flexible mandate to support political reconciliation, democracy-building and respect for human rights. Much of the Mission's work is focused on the human dimension. The range of activities covers human rights monitoring and support for the establishment of democratic institutions, free media and civil society. The mandate also provides for assistance in legislative reform and the establishment of the rule of law, as well as support for gender equality programmes.

I would also like here to commend the excellent cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in monitoring the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, concluded on 27 June 1997. In this context, both the OSCE and the United Nations served as observers in the elections. Although concerns had been raised regarding the independence of the media and election commissions, as well as the transparency of the counting and tabulation procedures, the elections are undoubtedly a significant step forward in the process of democratization.

Today, the main goals of the peace Agreement, namely, to establish peace and security and to enable national reconciliation, have been accomplished, as was pointed out by the representative of Tajikistan. On 31 March, the OSCE Troika welcomed the formal end of the transition period and the implementation of the General Agreement on Peace as an important benchmark in the process of national reconciliation and a move towards implementing reforms.

There are still many issues in the transformation process in Tajikistan which need further improvement: the democratization process, the human rights situation, the freedom of the media, the refugee situation, the establishment of civil society, the fight against organized crime and the support for economic transformation, which is very important. In his keynote speech at the Eighth OSCE Economic Forum in April, President Rakhmonov highlighted the many economic challenges which Tajikistan is facing.

In addition to the political and economic challenges, there are also environmental issues. The Istanbul OSCE Summit Declaration highlighted the risks of potential conflicts arising from environmental issues, in particular transboundary water issues, in Central Asia. Regional management of transboundary water resources can be a tool for promoting cooperation and improving economic and social development. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner, has taken up a proposal of the British Foreign Minister to intensify the dialogue among the Central Asian States with regard to these issues. The need of Central Asian States to accept responsibility for these problems and to seek solutions through regional cooperation will be emphasized.

The OSCE values the efforts of both Tajik sides and the achievements made so far. As has just been pointed out by the representative of the European Union, after the termination of UNMOT, the OSCE will be the focal point for the efforts of the international community in assisting Tajikistan. In this respect, the OSCE hopes to continue the excellent cooperation with UNDP, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A good example of this cooperation is the fight against international terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime and drug and arms trafficking. In October, the OSCE, together with the Vienna-based United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, will organize a conference in the region. This conference will address the complex interrelationships between drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism, with special emphasis on the rule of law, good governance and human rights.

In conclusion, I should like to inform the members of the Council that Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner, the Austrian Foreign Minister and Chairperson-in-Office, intends to visit Tajikistan in the near future to determine how the OSCE can further help in the transformation process. I can assure the Council that the Austrian Chair will spare no effort to strengthen the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in our common goal to assist Tajikistan and its people.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kazakhstan. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this open meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation in Tajikistan.

The delegation of Kazakhstan would also like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the efforts of the United Nations in the settlement of the conflict in that country. We agree with one of the main conclusions of the report that the early engagement of the United Nations in the conflict; sustained political support of the Security Council and interested Member States in the region; cooperation with other international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and the clear will of the people and the President of Tajikistan have put an end to hostilities and brought about the political solution of this crisis.

The recent elections to Parliament, held for the first time in Tajikistan on a multi-party basis, with the participation of a greater number of citizens and a pluralistic character, testified to the consolidation of Tajik society. We share the views, expressed by Member States during the meeting of the Security Council in March, that the elections played a significant role in advancing the democratic development of Tajikistan and building a civil society in that country. In our view, the newly elected bicameral Parliament, which has already convened its first session, will be one of the main instruments in moving the country forward towards progress, democracy and prosperity.

The report of the Secretary-General presents a bright and impressive picture of the important developments which preceded the establishment of peace in Tajikistan, emphasizing efforts to reach a ceasefire agreement and to solve existing problems through the political dialogue established with the help from the States of the region.

One ought to pay tribute to the staff of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), who, in difficult situations and sometimes sacrificing their lives, ensured the success of the Mission. A significant contribution to and support for the peace process were offered by the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations and the collective peacekeeping and border forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Stability in Tajikistan is of great importance not only to the Tajik people, but also to the peoples of the whole region. As a member of the Contact Group, Kazakhstan has made every effort to promote a peaceful settlement in Tajikistan. The border force unit of Kazakhstan has been guarding the frontiers of the Commonwealth in Tajikistan.

The Central Asian States are deeply concern by the unstable situation in the region, notably in neighbouring Afghanistan, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. Therefore, issues of regional security were among the main topics of the First Eurasian Economic Summit, recently held under the auspices of the World Economic Forum in Almaty.

The delegation of Kazakhstan is confident that the efforts to strengthen security undertaken by the countries of the region in various formats — including the Conference for Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the "Shanghai Five" and the agreement on joint action against terrorism, political and religious extremism, transnational organized crime and other threats to stability and security, signed in Tashkent this April by the four Central Asian leaders — will promote security and curb the escalation of tension.

Tajikistan is entering a new phase of nation-building. In order to build on the success achieved during the peace process in Tajikistan, the United Nations and the international community have to provide further assistance to the country. We wholeheartedly support the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a post-conflict peace-building office to address the difficult economic and social problems faced by Tajikistan today. In our view, projects for Tajikistan within the framework of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, recently inaugurated at the Eurasian Summit in Almaty, could play an important role in the economic rehabilitation and development of the country.

We appeal to all Member States to continue to render their support to Tajikistan in its reconstruction in the social and economic spheres and in building a stable and prosperous society. Kazakhstan is ready actively to participate in these endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would, first of all, like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting on the situation in Tajikistan with a view to reviewing the progress achieved by the parties in the peace process and the contribution of the United Nations.

It is heartening to note that the people of Tajikistan have come a long way since 1991 in achieving peace and national reconciliation. For me personally, it is a matter of special satisfaction, having been associated as Secretary-General of a regional cooperation organization, called the Economic Cooperation Organization, with the process of securing the fruits of political independence for the Central Asian republics by leading them on the path of economic resilience and self-reliance. All sides in the conflict deserve commendation for their wisdom and sagacity in choosing the path of peace by abandoning violence and destruction.

Since 1993, the United Nations has played a vital role in encouraging the parties in the conflict to achieve

sustainable peace in Tajikistan. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was in the vanguard in providing the stability that was required to pursue the peace process. Pakistan actively participated in the Mission by providing observers.

Another important area in which we contributed meaningfully was encouraging intra-Tajik dialogue as an observer to the process. Pakistan hosted the third round of talks in Islamabad in October 1994, which enabled the parties to make significant strides as they signed two important documents: the Protocol on the Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Agreement on a Temporary Ceasefire and the Cessation of Other Hostile Acts on the Tajik-Afghan Border and within the Country, and the joint communiqué on the results of the third round of intra-Tajik peace talks on national reconciliation.

When the parties eventually signed the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord on 27 June 1997, Pakistan agreed to become one of the Guarantor States. In this capacity, we continued to follow all developments in the political dialogue and played a positive role in encouraging the parties to remain on course and to fulfil their commitment to achieve the goals outlined by them in the General Agreement of 1997.

While we fully share the sense of satisfaction being expressed today on the advancement of the peace process in Tajikistan, I must point out here that the report of the Secretary-General which is under consideration of the Council at this meeting does not include any specific reference to Pakistan's contribution. On the other hand, in paragraph 9 of the report, the role of some countries has been recognized. We are not sure whether it is a deliberate omission or an inadvertent error. Whatever may be the case, the absence of recognition of Pakistan's significant role in the report and in any resultant statement raises questions about the objectivity and impartiality of those who are responsible for the preparation of these documents. We hope this is only an oversight and will be rectified.

In any case, Pakistan will continue to contribute to the post-conflict peace-building process in Tajikistan in keeping with our consistent policy and our commitment to the peace and prosperity of the people of Tajikistan, as well as for the entire region. We attach great importance to our relations with all the brotherly Central Asian Republics with whom we have historical bonds rooted in common faith, culture and heritage.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's abiding commitment to the consolidation of the peace process in Tajikistan.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me at the outset to express my thanks to the Secretary-General for the report we have received from him on the situation in Tajikistan. I also thank the Special Representative, Mr. Petrov, for his briefing.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is delighted to witness the successful completion of the peace process and achievement of national reconciliation in Tajikistan by implementation of the main provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord signed by the Tajik parties in 1997. We congratulate them on surmounting obstacles and consequently putting their country back on the road to peace, national reconciliation and development. They should indeed be commended for their belief in the peaceful settlement of the conflict, as well as for the willingness and dedication they demonstrated throughout the negotiations and the transitional period.

Undoubtedly, the restoration of peace and tranquillity in Tajikistan should also be considered a success for regional and international peace-making actors. Sustained efforts under the auspices of the United Nations, accompanied from the beginning by close cooperation and active participation of regional Governments, began to bear fruit in 1994 with the holding of the first round of the inter-Tajik talks in Moscow, followed by the second round in Tehran, resulting in the signing of the ceasefire agreement in the same year.

Likewise, the restoration of peace in Tajikistan will be remembered, I am sure, as one of the great achievements of the United Nations in the latter part of the twentieth century. There is no doubt that the Secretary-General, his successive special envoys and his colleagues in the Secretariat, as well as the men and women who served in the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), who worked in a frequently difficult and hazardous environment, played a decisive and commendable role in bringing about peace in that country. Appreciation goes also to the Security

Council, as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping forces and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission for their steadfast support given to the peace efforts in Tajikistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the peace mediators and an active member of the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations, did its best to help maintain political dialogue and create a favourable and conducive environment indispensable for the smooth progress of the inter-Tajik talks. We have spared no effort in helping to solve pressing issues from the very start of the talks, and we hope that the cordial and friendly relations existing between our two Governments and nations, which share many commonalities, will continue to grow steadfastly.

Although great success is at hand in Tajikistan and the country is on the path to a comprehensive and lasting peace, complacency should not be allowed. Due to the remaining root causes of the crisis, the possibility of renewed instability cannot be excluded. Daunting economic and social problems have yet to be addressed. Therefore, we totally agree with the Secretary-General that the international community's continued support in the post-conflict phase will be important for Tajikistan's ability to sustain and build on the achievements of the peace process.

Moreover, the impact of the Afghan crisis, as an external factor, on the still-fragile situation in Tajikistan continues to be a major cause for concern. Afghanistan is an ongoing destabilizing factor, adversely affecting peace and security throughout the region. I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention, once more, to the Afghan problem and appeal to the international community to increase its efforts aimed at putting an end to the regionally destabilizing conflict in Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of Uzbekistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of president of the Security Council for May and to express our confidence in the success of the work of the Council under your skilled guidance. Allow me also to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the preparation and submission of the most recent report on the situation in Tajikistan, and which contains important and relevant assessments of the developments in that country and a view of the United Nations further role in the post-conflict period.

Over the last seven years, the United Nations has been playing an active and important role in the establishment of peace and national accord on the land of Tajikistan, which has been rent by civil war. Staff members working in the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), sometimes under difficult and dangerous conditions, have made efforts to ensure the establishment of peace in that country. We will continue to cherish the sacred memory of those courageous staff members of the Mission who gave their lives in serving the cause of peace in Tajikistan.

The most recent events in the political and public life of Tajikistan clearly show that the country has made substantive progress towards the democratization of its society and the establishment of peace and national reconciliation, as well as towards the establishment of favourable conditions for the rehabilitation of an economy devastated by many years of war. These events represent an important contribution to the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, which was signed on 27 June 1997.

However, while paying due tribute to the significant progress that has been achieved in the political process, as well as in the implementation of the agreements on the establishment of peace, we believe it necessary to note that a great deal still remains to be done. As an example, we might note that the Protocol on Military Issues — in particular, its provisions on disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of opposition fighters — has, up to now, not been fully implemented.

We share the view that the continuation of an insecure situation, both within Tajikistan and throughout the Central Asian region, is being promoted by armed elements that are continuing to operate on the territory of Tajikistan and that are not under the control of the Government. We also support the view that, as a result of internal factors and of the continuing unstable situation in the region, in particular in neighbouring Afghanistan, we cannot at present exclude the possible threat of increased instability in the future.

In this regard, we hope that all parties to the peace process in Tajikistan will make all the necessary efforts to bring about the comprehensive and effective

implementation of the agreements for the establishment of peace and national accord.

For these reasons, Uzbekistan welcomes the proposal of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to establish a United Nations office for post-conflict peace-building and the strengthening of peace in Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan, more than any other country, has been directly interested in the speedy cessation of hostilities in brotherly Tajikistan. From the very first days of the conflict, my Government expressed serious concern about the situation in this neighbouring country and made all possible efforts to ensure successful progress in the peace process. This position was based above all on the fact that for many centuries the peoples of Central Asia have had the closest possible spiritual, cultural and socio-economic ties.

Given this situation and the desire to provide direct assistance to international efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the Tajik conflict, Uzbekistan became a member of the Contact Group, which was founded at the request of the Tajik parties in order to observe the implementation of the General Agreement and to render specialized assistance, consultative help and good offices.

Within the framework of its activities as part of that group, and as one of the Guarantor States, Uzbekistan sent food products, medicines and essential goods to Tajikistan; it provided as much assistance as possible to help refugees return to their homes; and it provided other needed humanitarian assistance.

Within the framework of international efforts undertaken under the aegis of the United Nations, the Republic of Uzbekistan actively participated in the drafting and adoption of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and, on an ongoing basis, co-sponsored these resolutions. Uzbekistan also consistently welcomed and supported Security Council resolutions and presidential statements concerning the situation in Tajikistan.

Today, Uzbekistan would like once again to reaffirm its readiness to continue to provide support for the peaceful and stable development of Tajikistan. This commitment was already noted in the statement of the Contact Group of 18 April of this year.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of Turkmenistan. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your very important post and to wish you further success.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his contribution to the achievement of peace in Tajikistan and for how the United Nations is approaching the post-conflict period. We would also like to thank Mr. Ivo Petrov for his effective work as representative of the Secretary-General.

We hold a very high opinion of the United Nations efforts to achieve peace and national accord in Tajikistan. We welcome the success achieved by all the parties in this laborious process, which is of enormous significance for our region.

The long-suffering people of Tajikistan finally have an opportunity to undertake the restoration of the country, to redress the consequences of the war and to begin a new stage of socio-economic development. We wish the people of Tajikistan peace and prosperity. In emphasizing the significance of the outcome achieved, we would like to emphasize the equally important need to reinforce this outcome, this being one of the links in a chain of measures to establish peace in the region and to bring about its development. In this context, we support the proposal of Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the establishment and functioning of a United Nations office for post-conflict peace-building and democracy in Tajikistan. We also call for comprehensive support for the peace process in Tajikistan by the international community.

The work of the United Nations in Tajikistan — together with that of the Commission on National Reconciliation, the Tajik parties, the Guarantor States and international organizations — has demonstrated the real effectiveness of the joint efforts to implement the General Agreement and political dialogue. This experience can serve as the basis for the peaceful solution of conflicts in other countries.

Turkmenistan, which is committed to all the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations, took an active part in achieving peace in Tajikistan, by participating in the negotiating processes and as a member of the Contact Group. Once again, we welcome the achievement of success in the peace process in Tajikistan and reaffirm our intention to promote actively

the consolidation of peace in this country and in the region as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of this item will take place immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4141

Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

Provisional

4141st Meeting

Friday, 12 May 2000, 6 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Yingfan	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Simón Padrós
	Bangladesh	Mr. Amin
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	France	Mr. Teixeira da Silva
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Kamal
	Mali	Mr. Ag Oumar
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. Scheffers
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Krokhmal
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Taylor
	United States of America	Mr. Minton

Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/387)

00-42963 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/387)

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/2000/387.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan of 5 May 2000 (S/2000/387).

"The Security Council welcomes the success achieved in the peace process in Tajikistan with the completion of implementation of main provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997 under the auspices of the United Nations (S/1997/510). It expresses its appreciation for sequential and persistent efforts of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leadership of the Commission on National Reconciliation in this regard. The Council acknowledges the significant achievement of the Tajik parties which have managed to overcome many obstacles and to put their country on the path to peace, national reconciliation and democracy. It joins the Secretary-General in hoping that these achievements will be consolidated in the further strengthening of the institutions in the country with a view to the democratic, economic and social development of Tajik society.

"The Security Council notes with satisfaction that the United Nations has played a successful and important role in the peace process. It highly appreciates the efforts of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), supported by the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations (the Contact Group), the Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (the CIS Peacekeeping Forces), in assisting the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation to the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other interested Member States for their sustained political support for the peace efforts of the United Nations in Tajikistan, for assisting the parties to maintain political dialogue and to overcome the crises in the peace process. It encourages the members of the former Contact Group to continue to support Tajikistan in its further efforts to consolidate peace, stability and democracy in the country.

"The Security Council notes with satisfaction that UNMOT maintained excellent relations with the CIS Peacekeeping Forces and the Russian border forces, which contributed to the success of the Mission and helped to support the political process on the ground.

"The Security Council reiterates its support for the intention of the Secretary-General to withdraw UNMOT when its mandate expires on 15 May 2000. It pays tribute to all those who served in UNMOT for the sake of peace in Tajikistan, and especially to those members of UNMOT who gave their lives in the cause of peace.

"The Security Council emphasizes that the continued support of the international community in the post-conflict phase will be crucial in allowing Tajikistan to sustain and build on the achievements of the peace process, and in helping it to lay a durable foundation for a better life for its people.

"In this regard, the Security Council expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his intention to inform the Council about modalities of the establishment and functioning of a post-conflict peace-building office of the United Nations in Tajikistan in order to consolidate peace and promote democracy. It encourages close cooperation between this office and the Mission of the OSCE and other

international agencies in Tajikistan. The Council also encourages Member States and others concerned to make voluntary contributions to support projects aimed at social and economic rehabilitation of this country."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2000/17.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.